THE STORY OF TERRIBLE TERRY

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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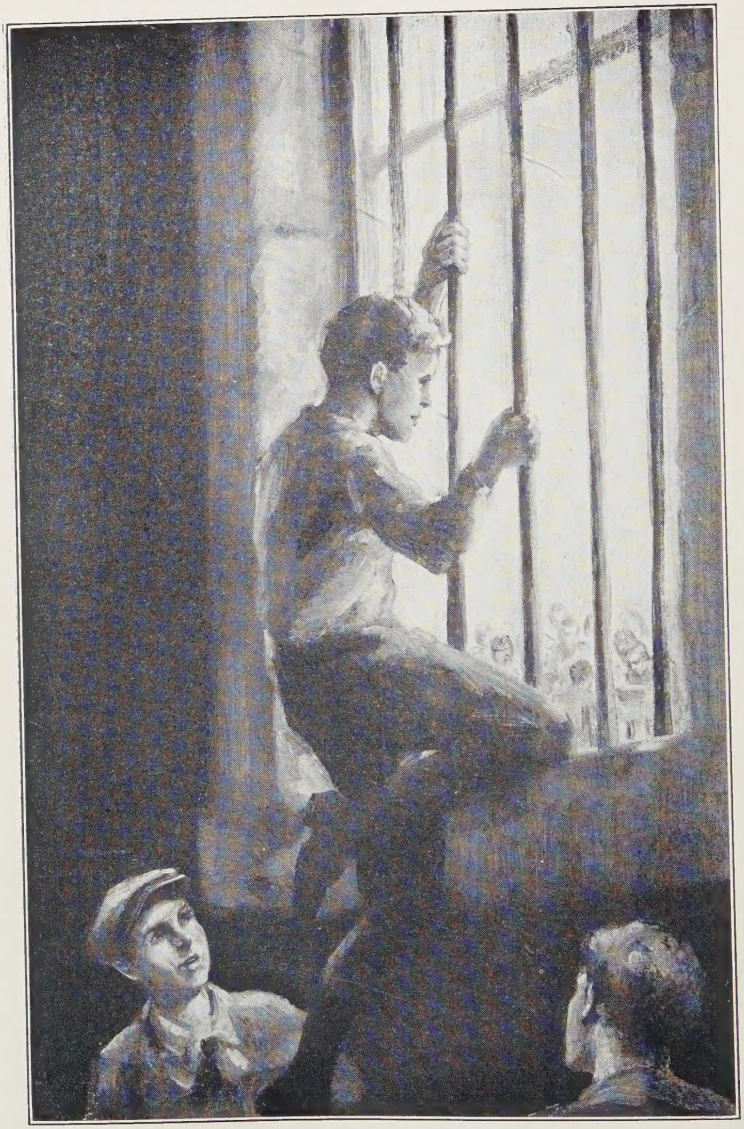

TERRY PULLED HIMSELF UP TO A MORE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION.

THE STORY OF TERRIBLE TERRY

By

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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THE TOM SLADE BOOKS
THE ROY BLAKELEY BOOKS
THE PEE-WEE HARRIS BOOKS
THE WESTY MARTIN BOOKS

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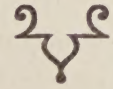

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THE STORY OF TERRIBLE TERRY

CHAPTER I

WHOOPEE

Terrible Terry was on the rampage. Not a porch chair had escaped him nor was there an unguarded window that had failed to resound to his blithesome efforts at tick-tack. And at the corner from which he and his followers had just barely escaped, a small group of irate residents stood about bemoaning the advent of Hallowe'en. Several full-sized swings and other articles of porch furniture were piled up in the street, having been tumbled there and left to the mercy of passing traffic by these small marauders.

"All is fair on Hallowe'en," said Terry, with breathless laughter. "We've had swell luck tonight, so far, ain't we?"

Two rowdyish looking boys nodded in smiling assent and scurried up close to their leader as he cut into the dark alley that ran alongside of the railroad tracks. From there, he led them across a small, open lot and thence behind the brilliantly lighted building that housed Bridgeboro's police force.

Cautiously they approached this home of law and order and their eyes sparkled curiously as Terry silently pointed to an open window on the yard level. They took turns in guessing what might be in the room and finally came to the conclusion that it must be used as a storeroom for it seemed to be devoid of any furniture. The only object visible was a large crate pushed into the far corner.

"What you s'pose they got it all lit up for, huh?" asked Terry.

His followers made no answer to that query for they knew well that their leader wouldn't lose any time in finding it out for himself. Terry worked out all his own problems in his own inimitable way.

"I'm going to climb in that window and see what's up," he announced to the taller of his

followers, Pip Cornell. Pip was known to his family as Nathaniel.

"S'pose a cop walks in then and catches you —what then, huh?" asked Pip, who had a quaint, matter-of-fact way about him.

"Well, I won't be doing anything, will I?" returned Terry, a trifle annoyed. "Is it a crime to go in a police station through a back yard window, is it?"

"Nah, I didn't say it was," answered Pip. "Only you got to be more careful about police stations than people's houses, don't you?"

"Not me," said Terry boastfully. "Ain't cops people when they ain't got uniforms on?"

Pip held both his tongue and his breath, for Terry was already approaching the opened window. Then, as his followers gasped with delight, he threw a skinny leg over the sill and pulled himself into the large, lighted room. Once in, he turned around and waved his hand to the watchers as if to say that it was all too easy.

Lemuel (Dinky) Duff, the shorter of Terry's followers, who acted as a sort of rear-guard of the gang, shook his head doubtfully. "Say,

he's got nerve a'right, Terry has," he whispered admiringly, "but maybe he'll get himself in trouble, huh?"

Pip wrinkled up his pug nose disdainfully and said, "You leave it to Terry, Dink. Just you leave it to Terry!"

They did leave it to Terry.

In a few seconds, smiling and perspiring, he appeared at the window with something bulky in his long, thin arms. He gave his head a frantic toss that indicated he was in need of immediate assistance, bringing Pip and Dinky in breathless haste to the window.

"I swiped a couple of tear bombs out of a big box in here," he whispered, hurriedly.

"*Goodnight!*" murmured Pip, obviously awe-stricken.

Dinky was speechless until Terry jarred him into action.

"Here, Dink, you take these things and hold 'em and Pip can help me down," said Terry, calmly.

Dinky patiently suffered the strange looking objects to be placed within the crook of his

arm. "What would they do if I was to drop one of 'em?" he whispered fearfully.

"Nothing, 't all," answered Terry, as he jumped to the ground with Pip's aid. "They'll make you cry something fierce, but that's all."

Suddenly a door opened in the big room and without waiting to see why or how, the little band took to their heels and disappeared in the darkness. Voices called after them but they paid no heed and the shriek of a police whistle only served to hasten their speed.

It wasn't until they had reached the armory building, a quarter of a mile away, that they stopped for good. Cars were lined up on either side of the street, but there wasn't a human being in sight. Terry gave a wild whoop of delight and threw himself down on the armory's soft lawn.

"Maybe we didn't give 'em a run for their money, huh?" he asked, between spasms of laughter. "Do you say we can't get away with *anything?*"

Words failed Pip and Dinky. They stood watching Terry, grinning in silent admiration, and in the soft glow of the lanterns, artistically

hung along the walk leading up to the armory door, they resembled a couple of tattered, mischievous brownies.

"Those nice boy scouts—they're giving a party here or something," said Terry, meaningly. "I read it in the paper tonight and they're going to have refreshments—all the things that you and Dink and me are crazy about."

Pip sighed. "That's just our luck!" he said, gloomily.

"What's just our luck?" Terry demanded, sitting up straight. "Don't fool yourself that we ain't lucky. Anyhow, what do you s'pose I ran all the way up here, for, huh?"

Pip's mouth opened wide with astonishment as Terry arose and nodded his head, significantly. "You don't deny you won't eat some of those refreshments if I think up a good scheme to get 'em, will you?" he asked after a low chuckle.

Pip, whom the school doctor had pronounced twenty-five pounds overweight, shook his head vehemently. "When I pass up a lot of free refreshments, I'll be dead," he said, convincingly.

"But how you going to get in without a ticket, huh?"

Terry pointed to the tear bombs, still intact in little Dinky's arms. "You watch my dust, Pip," he announced with gusto. "Just watch it, that's all."

CHAPTER II

TEARS

Terry sneaked impishly across the lawn and up close to one of the long, iron grilled windows. Standing on tiptoe, he looked in at the festive scene and, as Dinky and Pip came up behind, put out a warning hand for silence.

Presently he dug the worn toes of his brogans into a small niche in the stone foundation and with the aid of his thin, muscular arms, grasped the grilled bars and hoisted himself to a more advantageous position upon the cool, stone sill.

A bit of cheerful light from the vast hall, like some wondrous halo, encircled his bushy, red hair and gave his fair, freckled face a shining, almost angelic, expression. That did not make Terry a saint, however, for never before had he crowded so much mischief into a few hours as he did on that memorable night.

His legs dangled in an attitude that bespoke his keen enjoyment of the scene he was witnessing, while his followers stood attentively at his feet, wondering what next he was going to do. Presently, he turned his head and leaned over toward Pip.

"Some show," he said in a hoarse whisper. "Honest, they got everything from sandwiches to peanuts and ice-cream. Some of the scouts are duckin' for apples and some are trippin' around and dancing with a lot of stuck-up looking girls."

"Are they eating, too?" asked Pip, in a loud voice.

"Sh! Cut it out, Pip!" Terry warned, imperiously. "Do you want a cop or someone to hear us! If you want any of those refreshments you and Dink have got to do as I tell you. Now listen: your job is to turn out the lights when I whistle twice. Dinky's got to drop the tear bombs while I grab the eats. The switches are at the end of the hall—I found out about that long ago, and the refreshment stand is right as you go in the door. Understand?"

Pip nodded delightedly and Terry, being a true strategist, studied the scene of his prospective battlefield thoroughly before he alighted from the window sill. He affected a yawn and stretched his skinny arms and legs as if he were already master of the situation while poor little Dinky looked on, more than apprehensive, yet none the less admiringly.

"It's a cinch, kids," chuckled Terry, as he straightened to his full height of four feet and eleven and a half inches.

"It's a pip!" murmured Pip, who came by his name in exactly that manner.

"It'll be easier than staying away from school, and that ain't hard at all," said Terry.

Evidently Dinky didn't share in their elation, for he coughed nervously. "G'night," he said, in a squeaky, frightened voice, "we never swiped tear bombs out of the station house before though, did we? And won't it be worse to throw them at people, huh?"

"We're not going to throw them at people, Dink," Terry assured him, "we're going to throw them at boy scouts and they ain't people exactly, are they? I don't know, but I just got

a feeling I want to break up their party. Nobody's going to get hurt or nothing like that—man, I'm not that kind of a guy to hurt people. Anyway, those bombs make people cry like everything and I want to see some of those stuck-up scouts crying—honest, it'll be a joke."

"How can we see them crying if we have to beat it?" asked Pip, in his usual matter-of-fact manner.

Terry looked thoughtful. "Man, I never thought of that—hmph! Maybe we better beat it right home with the refreshments, huh? Anyway, you needn't start getting cold feet, Dink. I wouldn't see you get into trouble on account of me —*never!*"

After Dinky was thoroughly assured, they started back across the lawn with Terry in the lead. Cautiously he approached the lantern-lighted walk and vainly tried to step noiselessly over the rough stones with a loose sole on his right shoe flip-flapping at every step. Impatiently, he stopped and backing up against the armory wall, tore the offending piece of leather off, leaving his bare foot quite exposed to the ground.

"I ought to have worn my Sunday socks," he explained to Pip and Dinky. "They got feet in 'em most always and it's hard to run without feet in your socks—maybe we'll have to run."

The next moment Terry had forgotten about the condition of his shoes and plunged into the armory hall, fearlessly. His companions stepped more cautiously and kept their eyes on the door ahead, for just inside of it were the coveted refreshments.

Music trailed out to them gently and laughing voices gave them added courage. Pip stood alongside of the switches and Dinky went on past to Terry's side, holding fast to the bulky bombs. So far, everything had gone along without a hitch—indeed, it seemed the perfect plan.

Then came the signal—Terry's shrill whistle, once, twice. Pip's hand pulled down the switches in a flashing second and as he ran stumblingly through the dark hall for the street door, he heard hoarse shouts and cries. Hysterical laughter followed and above the din he heard Dinky's voice.

"Wait for me, Pip," the little fellow was calling, breathlessly. "I threw 'em all right—Terry's told me to tell you something—wait for me!"

Pip crossed the lawn and waited for Dinky behind a huge lilac bush. His heart beat frantically as he heard the pandemonium from within the building and wondered, fearfully, if it concerned Terry in any way.

Dinky ran out of the building and across the lawn, breathlessly. "We should beat it right home, Pip," he said, hoarsely. "That's what Terry says. He'll come too—he's grabbing the eats. Hurry, we got to run!"

And run they did. One would almost be tempted to wager that they had reached their humble neighborhood in Henry Street before Terry, flushed of face and pleasantly excited, had reached the armory door, unnoticed.

The refreshments that he held in either hand seemed to weight him down as he ran across the lawn and he realized that free hands do help considerably in increasing one's speed. At that juncture he stumbled, then tripped, and some-

thing sharp and painful pricked the exposed sole of his foot.

The lights suddenly went on in the armory. The sound of footsteps and excited voices coming toward the door brought cold perspiration out on his forehead for he could not stand on his right foot, so painful was it. Just then he espied the lilac bush.

He hopped on his left foot with great effort and after what seemed an eternity reached the large bush and dropped gratefully behind it. The voices were outside the building now, he knew—they seemed to be all around him.

He huddled close and to still the beating of his heart ran his hand along the offending foot and pulled out a thorn. He was free to run now—free to escape from these voices that were hunting him, he thought. Impulsively, he got to his knees, listened, then dropped to the ground again.

A twig crackled noisily under a heavy footstep. Terry could see the feet and watched them, fascinated, long before he could gather courage enough to look at the rest of the man.

When he did it was only because the man's steady gaze forced him to look.

His heart leaped, thankfully. The lantern light from the walk revealed, not a policeman as he feared, but a man in khaki uniform, whom he knew by sight as "that scout boss, Mr. Ellsworth." And Mr. Ellsworth, scoutmaster of First Bridgeboro Troop, B. S. A., knew every boy in his community, by sight and otherwise.

It was a little difficult at first for this kindly man to recognize that small, upturned face behind the lilac bush, as the result of the so recent tear bomb episode. In point of fact, he was still trying to determine the identity of this young marauder through a blur of tears, furiously mopping his glistening cheeks the while. Indeed he looked quite ridiculous and the most serious minded person would have been aroused to laughter.

One could hardly blame Terry for chuckling. In truth, his chuckles soon gave way to loud peals of uncontrollable mirth.

CHAPTER III

GOOD INTENTIONS

"Is that you, Terry Dunn?" asked Mr. Ellsworth, after a pause.

"Y-y-yes, sir!" answered Terry, stifling his mirth and getting quickly to his feet.

"I suppose you've enjoyed this little affair immensely, eh?" the scoutmaster queried, rather sternly.

"Yes—yes, sir!"

"Oh, I see. And of course you're not going to deny that you planned it, eh?"

"No, sir. I don't lie about things, no matter what! Sure, I thought it all up and I did it, too!"

The tears were subsiding considerably. Mr. Ellsworth eyed the ragged urchin, thoughtfully. "Well, you've certainly earned the name of Terrible Terry tonight," he said, gravely.

"You might have been the means of hurting someone."

"But I didn't hurt anyone, did I?" Terry asked, alarmed.

"Fortunately, no. But those tear bombs have an uncomfortable effect on people. Where did you get them?"

Terry told the scoutmaster, truthfully.

"I suppose I really ought to take you to the station house, Terry," Mr. Ellsworth said at length. "You not only stole the bombs, which is a crime, but you threw them into a hall full of innocent people and rendered them temporarily sightless. And in turning off the lights you made their predicament twice as unfortunate. It was only the good will of Providence that prevented everyone from falling and having an accident. It was rather a far-fetched Hallowe'en prank, don't you think?"

"Man, I did it for fun!" Terry protested. Then as a khaki clad scout about his own age came up to them, smiling critically, he added: "Everything I do is for fun—what else do you expect a fella to do, huh?"

Mr. Ellsworth looked at the newcomer and

nodded. "Hmph! This is Roland Terhune, Terry. Perhaps you know him?"

"Not so's you'd notice it," answered Terry, tersely. "I've seen him on Main Street dozens of times and he's seen me too and that's enough. Those guys up on the hill don't want to be bothered with us poor guys down on Henry Street and maybe we feel the same about them."

Mr. Ellsworth smiled. "That's where you're wrong, Terry," he said, kindly. "The boys uptown all want to get acquainted with you Henry Street boys if you'll only let them. And remember that when you boys put on scout uniforms you're all scouts together and no one cares where you come from. The same with Roland here—he's just lately joined and worked himself up to a first class scout but he hasn't any patrol. He has to form one of his own and his grandfather has suggested that we ought to round up some of you fellows downtown for it."

Terry sniffed audibly and wrinkled his nose at Roland. "I got my own gang," he said, boastfully.

"Yes," smiled Mr. Ellsworth, "I know that. It's for that very reason that I'd like you to join

Roland's patrol. Then you could learn from him—from any of the scouts, in fact—just what their idea of fun is. I'm sure that they can prove to you that they have all the fun they want without stealing tear bombs out of the police station and throwing them into the midst of a happy gathering such as we had in there tonight."

Terry slyly glanced Roland's way and again caught him smiling. He wondered for a moment whether the rich boy was smiling with him or at him. "Anyway, he's a highbrow, that's what he is," he said quite fiercely to himself. "He's only standing there and laughing up his sleeve at me 'cause I got caught. But I'll show him I'm not afraid to go to jail even if I have to go!" And to Mr. Ellsworth, he said aloud: "I'm ready to go to the station house with you now. I even would have gotten away only a thorn got stuck in my foot where the sole was ripped off."

Mr. Ellsworth smiled, a patient, kindly smile. "You haven't any mother, have you, Terry?" he asked.

"Nope," said Terry, indifferently, and solely

for Roland's benefit. "There ain't anybody but Andy—he's my uncle and he's getting kind of old. He says my mother died when I was two years old. But I should worry! I have lots of fun even if I haven't any mother."

"I gathered as much, Terry," said Mr. Ellsworth, in the same kindly manner. "You have as much fun, but not as much care. And in the end, these practical jokes of yours may lead you into real, serious troubles. Have you ever thought of that?"

"Nope. I never think about what's going to happen. I only think what happens now or whenever I'm doing a thing. Man, I should worry about tomorrow, next year or a hundred years!" Terry was breathless but secretly hoped that his outburst would impress Roland.

Mr. Ellsworth nodded. "That's optimism on a large scale," he said. "Well, Terry, you have terrible ideas and plans sometimes it seems to me, but I don't really believe that there's anything at work in you but sheer mischief."

"I like swell fun," boasted Terry, pleased at

the appearance of a half dozen or more scouts. He liked an audience.

"I know you like fun," smiled Mr. Ellsworth. "And I like your candor. That's the reason I'm not going to notify the police. I think you'll be a little more careful in the future, won't you?"

Terry gasped with surprise. "Man! Honest? Cross your heart?"

Mr. Ellsworth crossed his heart. "I have my reasons, Terry," he said, seriously. "I think you've got the raw material for an A-1 scout."

Terry frowned. "I don't like scouts," he said, emphatically. "None of 'em. They're sissified most always." His look was directed at Roland.

Roland took this pointed reference to himself quite gracefully—almost good-naturedly. He even allowed the ghost of a smile to play about his light blue eyes and indifferently whisked back a lock of red hair that had escaped from under the brim of his trim-looking scout hat. Had it not been for the clear, deep blue of Terry's eyes, the resemblance between the two boys would have been startling.

Mr. Ellsworth noted it and smiling away Terry's opinion of the scouts, said, "Boys that look as much alike as you and Roland do ought to become friends."

"I don't want to look like him," Terry burst forth. "I bet I'd even look better'n him if I was dressed up like he is!"

The scoutmaster laughed. "Well, there's something to be said for that, too, Terry," he said. "But we won't argue about that now. We'll wait until the day you put on a scout suit and I'll be the judge."

"I'll never put a scout suit on," Terry said obstinately.

A small group of young ladies and girls with laughing and tear-stained faces were quickly gathering about the lilac bush. Terry eyed them almost angrily and, pushing them aside, limped away over the lawn in as majestic a manner as he could.

"Remember, Terry," called Mr. Ellsworth, "I'm going to keep an eye on you in the future."

Terry kept on going as if he hadn't heard. Secretly, however, he was congratulating himself that the episode had had such a favorable

ending. "I sure almost got into trouble that time," he said, aloud, as he turned down a dark alley that shortened the route to Henry Street. "Man, no matter what, that Mr. Ellsworth ain't so bad even if he does mix up with those scouts. He could have had me sent away or something —he sure could have!"

It was almost eleven o'clock when he turned into the dim, narrow confines of Henry Street and past the rickety frame building that housed Sam's Corner Cash Grocery. After he had gone a few feet, he heard a hissing sound and the scraping of feet and, turning quickly, saw Pip and Dinky emerging from under Sam's brand new awning.

Terry greeted them with a whoop of joy and after a few moments' consultation retired under the awning to Sam's doorstep to talk it over. The recital was a trifle lengthy, owing to the leader's love of embellishment, and when it was at last finished Pip sighed wistfully.

"And you ain't got even a piece of cake to show for all that trouble?" he asked.

"The stuff all went on the ground when I flopped behind the bush," answered Terry, re-

gretfully. "And when Mr. Ellsworth caught me I couldn't pick 'em up and let him get that on me, too, could I? Man, he said it was a crime to steal those tear-bombs even! *I* don't call that stealing—if *we* hadn't thrown 'em around, the cops would do it, so what's the difference!"

"Sure, that's what I say," said Pip, sympathetically. "Anyhow, you didn't take those refreshments with you so you didn't swipe *them* exactly. But you can't do nothing about the tear bombs now. They're all smashed."

Terry shifted on the doorstep, meditatively, and pushed back a bit of his unruly hair. "Listen, fellas," he said, seriously: "I tell you what—let's go around in the back and see if Sam's got any melons. If he has, we'll scrape out the insides and fill 'em up with water."

"Then what?" asked Pip, eagerly.

"Well, just to show Mr. Ellsworth what kind of a guy I am, we'll take 'em up to the station house and if the window's still open and no one's around, I'll put 'em in the crate where I got the tear bombs out of," he said, breathlessly. "That's better than nothing at all, ain't it? It shows I mean good, don't it?"

With vigorous shakings of the head, Pip and Dinky agreed that it did. And if they deemed Terry's logic a bit unique, the thought of the delicious melon pulp awaiting their yearning palates dispelled all doubt in the matter.

CHAPTER IV

ANDY

After Terry had thoroughly filled his stomach and had quieted his conscience, he entered the little three room shack on Henry Street that was home to him. It was well past midnight.

Andy, his uncle, called out to him from the bedroom. "That you, Terry?"

"Yeah. What you want?"

"It's late for you to be comin' in."

"Yeah, but it's Hallowe'en."

"Did you go to school today, Terry?"

"Nah. They shouldn't have school on Hallowe'en, Andy. Man, it only comes once a year —they should give us a holiday and then I wouldn't have to sneak off."

Andy sighed. "You need somebody to give yuh a good talkin' to," he said, sleepily. "I'm beginnin' to realize I ain't no hand in bringin'

up children. Now you'll git it good from your teacher tomorrer."

Terry was intent on kicking off both shoes at once and holding his feet in such a manner that he could aim directly at the opposite wall. When this was successfully accomplished, he said, "I should worry about teachers, Andy. They get tired of telling me things after awhile. What I need is a new pair of shoes."

"Eh, yes," said Andy, with a more pronounced sigh that time. "Out o' my next pay I'll get you a pair, Terry. It'll be a full pay."

Terry had often heard about full pays, but they seldom materialized. Andy loved to take a day or so out of the week in order to do the things he loved to do. In summertime it was fishing and in winter, hunting. For this reason his pays were seldom full, as he expressed it, and yet there was something quaint and lovable about him. His weakness for loafing on working days did not make people like him the less. Certainly Terry never wavered in his affection for his uncle because of it—he loved him the more.

As far back as Terry could remember, Andy

had had many occupations. He had been gardener for many of Bridgeboro's wealthier families, but because of his indolent habits, he gradually found it difficult to get a job. He had drifted from one thing to another—dishwashing in restaurants, cleaning in office buildings and now he was at the paper factory as a sort of handy man.

Little was known of Terry's mother except that she was Andy's sister and had come from Connecticut to keep house for her brother after the death of her husband. Her arrival with the then infant Terry was unheralded and at night, and the next morning she took her place, simply, in the life of Henry Street, announcing that she would take in sewing for a living.

Terry was accepted as just another child in the neighborhood until after his mother's death two years later. It was then that Henry Street decided that he was remarkably different from other children, being able to think up more mischief than poor, inefficient Andy was able to cope with. And before the child reached the amazing age of four, it was told, the broken windows that his uncle had paid for in and

around the lower part of Bridgeboro, would have totalled a nice, tidy sum.

It was no great wonder then that after he had been in school two years, one of the lower primary teachers had spoken of him as "that terrible Terry Dunn." He well earned that appellation one fall day by piling a great bunch of wet newspapers in the hot-air furnace when the janitor was out of the basement. It has often been told since how the thick smoke caused a near-panic and after a hasty fire-drill the entire school was dismissed for the afternoon.

Terry received more than an afternoon's holiday. He was suspended for a week and after making a voluntary apology explained that he had just wanted to go fishing and couldn't think of any other way of getting out of school after the noon luncheon period was over.

And now another Hallowe'en had passed for the clock had just struck one. Terry sighed regretfully and dangled his feet against the legs of the rickety chair upon which he sat. He was not yet tired enough to go to bed, he told himself. High days and holidays were short days indeed.

Andy suddenly appeared in the doorway, stooped and trying to look severe. His night-shirt hanging a trifle below a threadbare and abbreviated bathrobe had the effect of making him look shorter than he really was. And in the dim gaslight his small, bald head stood out in bold relief.

"Ain't you never goin' to git to bed tonight?" he asked Terry, and walked over to an old red plush chair in the far corner of the room.

"Man, I had too much fun today, Andy," the boy answered with a low chuckle. "Some fun and a good scare I had too." Very elaborately, he went over the narrative just as he had done for Pip and Dinky.

"You'll get into trouble if you ain't careful," Andy warned him.

"Leave it to me," said Terry, with a shake of his head. "That Mr. Ellsworth was nice to me even if he is a scout, sort of. But I didn't like that Roland bird, nohow."

"Roland, eh—Roland. Who is that, Terry?" Andy asked, glancing at the shabby little table that stood between them.

"Roland Terhune," answered Terry. "You

worked for some Terhunes once, didn't you?''

Andy nodded, wearily.

''Well, it's the grandson that I saw tonight. Mr. Ellsworth said we should be friends 'cause we both got red hair—*man!* Can you imagine me and that guy shooting marbles together and breaking windows, huh? Oh boy! The way he was all dolled up in that scout suit'd give you a pain in the neck. He didn't say anything but he was high-hattin' me like everything.''

Andy said nothing for a moment, but looked hopelessly around the humble room with its few sticks of worn out furniture. Now and then his lip quivered a trifle as if he wanted to say something but couldn't. Finally he stood up.

''Maybe—maybe,'' he stammered, ''maybe it'd be good for you to make friends with a boy like that Ter—Terhune. Maybe it's be good for you to get into that scout business, too, huh, Terry?''

Terry scowled. ''Man, are you getting that scout bug, too! I wouldn't join them, no matter what!''

Andy looked at the boy, appealingly. "It wouldn't hurt you none to join 'em, Terry," he said, wagging his small head from side to side. "And it might be luck to know a fella like that Terhune boy—rich folks like he's got could do a powerful lot for a poor boy like you are. If you didn't have me any more it'd be nice to know you got friends that won't 'xactly see you starve."

"I'd like to see myself starve," said Terry, with perfect assurance. "Man, I'm not so crazy!"

"Crazy or not, that happens to lots o' boys that are left alone in the world and ain't got much education," said Andy, shuffling back toward the bedroom. "They turn dishonest just to eat and sleep and then what happens? So take my advice, Terry and be a good boy and try to know people what'll help you up in the world. Lookit where I am for loafin' all my life—you don't want to be like me, do you?"

Tears of affection were brimming in Terry's eyes. "Aw, you ain't so bad, Andy," he said, with difficulty. "Even if you ain't made any money, you've been kinder to me, I bet, than

rich people would. Man, I wouldn't care if I didn't ever have any money, just so long as I'd be like you—you know—never getting mad at people or anything."

"That's why I can't do anything with you, Terry, boy," Andy said, fondly. He choked audibly, then: "C'm on and git to bed—you'll not be fit to go to school in the morning."

Terry yawned and pattered barefoot over the rough board floor after his uncle. "They shouldn't have school the day after Hallowe'en, Andy," he said, disgustedly. "Man, it only comes once a year and if they'd make it a holiday I wouldn't have to take it off myself."

CHAPTER V

THE COAL SITUATION

There were many weeks that winter when Andy's pays were not so full. To many boys this would have been a problem, especially in the matter of fuel. But to Terry, who had had recourse to Terhune's Coal Yards many times before, it was simply a case of ingenuity, or better still, strategy.

The yard, which lay over the meadows at the foot of Henry Street, had enough coal scattered over its bleak, bare grounds to keep Andy and Terry warm for the rest of their natural lives. But in the interests of law and order an over-observant watchman was employed along with a few railroad detectives to see that the coal remained on the ground. Time and the elements have already claimed its share of the anthracite, for all through the yards, acre upon

acre, one may see great chunks and small chunks that have become so imbedded in the earth that they look and feel like rock.

"It's a case of who gets it first," said Terry, to his uncle one day, "me or the earth. And I'm Johnny-on-the-Spot every time. The earth won't get ahead of me if I know it."

And so it happened that Dinky, carrying a large basket (known as the coal basket), with Pip and Terry, started down Henry Street one Saturday morning on a mission to outwit the watchman at the yards. It was an exhilirating mission, to say the least, one that never ceased to give the boys their full share of thrills.

On the corner, at the end of the second block, they stopped short in front of the old, deserted Hunter Mansion. Tucker Marshall, a sleek, slim-looking boy of eighteen, sat languidly astride of the dilapidated porch rail, smiling. Terry eyed him, inquiringly pert.

"Say," he shouted in his loudest voice, "this ain't your place, Tuck. It's ours—mine and Pip's and Dink's. Do you say it ain't?"

Tucker Marshall looked searchingly down at the three little ruffians and smiled, a rather

crooked smile that he had affected since going into long pants. "Who wants to know?" he asked.

"Me," said Terry, tersely, *"with a capital M!"*

"Oh, yeah!" laughed Marshall. "You kids got the deed for this pile o' second hand lumber, huh?"

"Well, maybe we don't own it," said Terry, angrily, "but we got a right to it, sort of. Man, it's been our hang-out for years and even the cops let us play here and all because we never destroyed anything. They said it was falling to pieces anyhow, but still we didn't ever touch nothing just so's we could keep on coming here and call it our place. Do you say we ain't got a right to call it our place, huh?"

"What do I care what you call it!" said Marshall, annoyed. "I should worry about the dump—I'm just waiting for a friend, that's all. There ain't any law against that, is there?"

"Nope," said Terry, but still disapproving of Tucker's presence. "How long you going to be here?"

"Why?" returned Marshall, evasively, "are you kids going to play here this morning?"

"We're going down to Terhune's and pick up some chunks, and when I say we'll pick 'em up, why, we'll *pick 'em up!*" Terry said, boastfully.

Marshall laughed. Then, thoughtfully, he dug his long, thin fingers into his pockets and brought forth some loose change. This he handed over to Terry. "There," he said, "divide that up between the three of you. It's to bring you luck. I heard you can always pick up more chunks at the Crossley yards, kids. Ever hear that? The watchman ain't so nosey as the one at Terhune's. Why don't you try it?"

That was advice worth considering, Terry thought. The Crossley yards were a half mile farther on down the railroad tracks, but it seemed a likely proposition, if the watchman was non-observant of diminutive trespassers like themselves. And if he was observant there was always the novelty of a chase to be thought of.

"All right," said Terry, impulsively. "We'll try Crossley's, then." And, as was his habit, he reverted to the subject uppermost in his mind. "You ain't going to hang out here long, are you, Tuck? Because when we come back we're going to play and maybe we'll even hold a meeting that has to be private, sort of. You know—we can't have anyone around because it's our place!"

Marshall laughed, sardonically. "Aw, go on —beat it!" he said, hastily. "What do you think—I'm going to run away with the place! By the time you're back from Crossley's I'll be five miles from here—maybe ten."

Terry felt relieved. He disliked Marshall, distrusted him, and held the opinion with Henry Street that the loafing young man would some day get into serious trouble and bring his good, but poor parents to grief.

Perhaps it was Andy's little talk after the Hallowe'en excursion that suddenly came to mind, perhaps not. At any rate, Terry was seized with a sudden desire to show Marshall that his ambitions in the future were going to be lofty and noble.

"I'm going to work hard when I get as old as you," said Terry, frankly. "Maybe even this year I'll start working, 'cause I'm going to save up so I can buy this place some day. Then nobody will be allowed to sit on the porch rail or nothing—nobody but Pip and Dink and me. I'm going to be rich!"

"Yeah," said Marshall, more amused than anything. "You'll have to be richer than the Terhunes, then, kid, because I hear they own this place and everything else up and down Henry Street—your house, my house, everybody's house. Try and get ahead of that old miser and you'll have to go some. The only thing he don't own in Bridgeboro is the air."

Terry gasped with surprise, but held his ground. Once he got started on an idea, he stuck to it. "Just the same, I'll own it some day," he persisted. "It doesn't say because he's got so much money that I won't have money, too, does it?"

Marshall did not answer, but looked anxiously up the street. Then, restlessly, he paced up and down the porch and Terry, construing this action as a peremptory dismissal, linked arms

with his cronies and marched defiantly down the street.

"Tuck ain't any good," he announced at length. "I always heard Andy say it, and now I know he was right. Anyway, he can't be making dates there any more and if I see him, I'll think up something to make trouble for him."

"We'll help you," said Pip, loyally.

"Same here," squeaked Dinky, vehemently. "My ma says he ain't a good example for us kids. He ought to work."

"I'm going to work," said Terry, quite seriously. "We're all going to work. We could work for Sam, maybe. I'm going to ask him."

"You won't take any more oranges or apples that have fallen on the floor then, huh?" inquired Pip, anxiously.

"Nope," answered Terry, his voice ringing with contrition. "We shouldn't have done that, ever, but then mostly always there was bad spots in the things we took so Sam couldn't have sold them, anyway. But I'm going to be like Andy wants me to after this. I'm going to be am—am . . ."

"Ambitious," Pip interposed, helpfully.

"Yeah, ambitious," acknowledged Terry, gratefully. "I really am going to save money and build our hang-out over so we can live in it when we get older. What do you say?"

Pip and Dinky thought it was an inspiration and under the glamour of Terry's temperamental outburst of flimsy air castles, they soared to unknown heights. Dinky especially fell under the spell of his leader's noble aspirations and keenly suffered a momentary pang of conscience.

"Is—is it stealing to swipe some prunes that have mostly all worms in them?" he asked, timidly.

Terry frowned, thoughtfully. "From Sam?" he asked, with sudden dignity.

"Yeah," answered Dinky, remorsefully. "I took four yesterday and three had worms in them. They were kind of dried, anyhow."

"Then it ain't stealing, I guess. Anyhow, I'll ask Andy about it, but hereafter we all got to do things right."

They resolved to do that, solemnly, and reached the railroad tracks that ran alongside of Terhune's vast yards. Suddenly the ever-

observant watchman appeared from behind the great board fence that enclosed the upper end of the property where the lumber was stored. He stopped short at sight of the "three musketeers," as he had called them since a certain memorable occasion.

"Well, where are you kids going?" he asked, his arms akimbo, and a menacing frown on his soiled, weather-beaten features.

"Crossley's," said Terry, grinning triumphantly. "We don't like your chunks here any more."

The man frowned. "Yeah? Well, that saves me some steps, anyway. See that you don't change your mind. Keep right on going," he growled and slipped behind the fence.

Terry's fair, freckled brows wrinkled up, thoughtfully. Suddenly he stopped and drew the attention of his companions to a train of five full coal cars that were being unloaded at the further end of the yards.

"Just for him talking so mean and all, we won't go on to Crossley's," he said, determinedly. "We'll fool him for his smart talk—I'll fix him good!"

DINKY GATHERED THE PRECIOUS NUGGETS INTO THE BASKET WHILE TERRY SUPERVISED THE ATTACK.

By *good* he meant thoroughly. And no one who had witnessed Terry's methods in handling the coal situation could deny that he was aught but efficient.

CHAPTER VI

EAVESDROPPING

They walked on along the track, gathering up stray pieces of soft coal as they went. When just opposite the scene of their intended scoop, Terry gave them a signal and quickly they retreated between two empty box cars that stood on the siding outside the yards.

The constant buzzing of the coal elevator drowned out the merry talk and laughter of the men who were standing inside one of the cars, unloading. Terry stood on tiptoe and after calculating the distance of their bobbing heads beyond the high fence, carefully aimed a good-sized piece of soft coal.

As it soared through the air, Pip dutifully aimed another and in a second they heard hoarse shouts, followed by a veritable shower of egg coal falling all about them. Dinky dex-

terously gathered these precious nuggets into the basket while Terry supervised the attack. With this method it was only a matter of seconds before the basket was full.

Their method of departure had invariably been successful. Only on rare occasions had any obstacle thwarted their swift retreat. Dinky, being the smallest, sneaked back through the meadow path with the coal basket, where he was completely protected from searchers by the high, waving grass. Terry and Pip, however, were less fortunate, for their height made escape in that direction impossible. Content they had to be in dodging in and around box cars until the excitement had subsided and they were free to slink quickly through the open spaces and thence into Henry Street.

On this ocasion, after Dinky had safely disappeared among the tall, dead strands of meadow grass, Pip and Terry made haste to depart. The watchman's loud voice could be heard above the shouts of the laborers and the boys knew from past experiences that distance meant safety.

They ran breathlessly on and came to a line

of empty grain cars that had to be traversed before they could cut into Henry Street and freedom. Terry dodged underneath one of them and crawled through with Pip close at his heels. Once on the other side they straightened up with relief, only to be startled by the sound of someone jumping heavily to the ground nearby.

Terry turned in a flash and saw that it was a railroad detective. His heart missed a beat; this was an entirely different situation—something more than being frightened away by the watchman. It meant a real chase, he had heard from others who had had the experience.

The detective took a step—it seemed almost a leap to Terry. He grasped Pip's arm fiercely. "C'm on!" he cried. "Zigzag, Pip—make him dizzy!"

In a moment, their skinny legs were crisscrossing each other up the stretch of ties with the detective after them at a fair distance. Terry and Pip were more than adept in this zigzag chase, and to see them running at lightning speed and continually crossing and re-

crossing in front of each other, was enough to make the most clear-headed person dizzy. In truth, they resembled two scarecrows being blown crazily about by a freakish wind.

The detective stopped shortly and in spite of the chill day, mopped his perspiring forehead with weary movements. The fleeing pair, however, were too intent on eluding their pursuer to turn and witness their triumph over him and spent more of their energy than was necessary by separating and proceeding up their respective alleys as a last precautionary measure.

The alley leading to Andy's home had the distinction of being part of the old mansion's back yard. As Terry neared the littered area, he was seized with an impulse to go in and there recover from the effects of his flight. The decadent place had never looked more peaceful or inviting and the fact that his pursuer was now imaginary did not detract from the glamour of the thought that only by hiding in there could he safely elude the detective that day.

And so with the noiseless tread of a warrior

he slipped underneath the partly opened cellar-board and into the dark, musty cellar. Of course there was no especial reason why he must go in through the cellar entrance. In point of fact, the mansion's every window and door was unlocked and open to the wide world. But Terry, being himself, must start from the ground and go upward. It cannot be remembered that he ever entered the place by any other entrance.

He moved cautiously through the rows of old boxes and piles of rotting papers. The thump of a rat scurrying toward its hole in one of the dark corners did not disturb him in the least. There was a sort of triangular puddle of water, thick with green scum, that was always motionless and lay to the right of the stairs leading up to the kitchen. This Terry always managed to jump over, be it the dead of night or the middle of the day.

Noiselessly, he jumped and landed on the second step of the stair. Sometimes he had even made the third step, but on this occasion he was content with a small achievement for certain alien sounds issuing from the kitchen

fell upon his ears. Instinctively, he huddled up against the cobwebbed walls and listened.

Gradually it came to him that it was the hum of voices—voices in ordinary conversation. Not the quick, rasping voices of Pip or Dinky. They generally shouted in friendly argument and only when some great scheme was afoot did they murmur discreetly.

On hands and knees, Terry crawled up the steps until he came to the top. There the voices became quite distinct and as soon as he could breathe easily, he made out Tucker Marshall's droning tones.

"A nerve he's got to come in here," Terry told himself angrily. "And after he promised me he'd go right away and wouldn't come here again."

"Aw, the kids won't be here for a while yet," Marshall's voice droned in upon his thoughts. "I sent them to Crossley's Yards to get them out of the way so they wouldn't be snooping while we were talking. You'd think they owned this dump to hear that kid, Terry, talk. I thought it would be better to meet you here

because no one in Bridgeboro ever comes down this way. Not even the cops."

Terry held his breath, fearfully.

"That's good," said a voice, not familiar to Terry's keen ears. "The jig would be up if anyone that knows me saw me talking to you."

There was silence for a moment. Then came a scraping sound and a shuffling of feet over the kitchen floor. Terry guessed that they had been sitting on the soap boxes that he had provided for the little conferences that Pip and Dinky and himself were accustomed to hold when meditating great problems. He resented any outsider sitting upon them, especially Tucker Marshall.

"Well, I can't blame you for wanting to be careful," said Marshall at length. "It'd spoil everything and besides I am kind o' well known around some parts of Bridgeboro, too."

"Grandpop's a wise old bird," said the other. "Gosh, he's got a way of thinking things and always getting the right dope. He doesn't have any too much patience with me as it is, but I should worry!"

"You should worry, is right," said Marshall,

affably. "Even the wisest of 'em fall hard sometimes."

There was a low laugh and the sound of footsteps going out of the kitchen and along the wide hall. Terry could visualize just where they were when they stopped again, evidently to talk over something else. He could not hear what was being said and frowned with disappointment.

Suddenly he sneaked back down the stairs and through the cellar as noiselessly as he had come. Once out in the alley he thought of the oak tree in the side yard overlooking the mansion's front porch and hurried around behind its broad trunk.

Huddling his thin body close to the trunk, he peered cautiously out and grinned with satisfaction at the excellent view he had of the mansion porch and flagstone walk leading out to Henry Street. He had not long to wait for the squeak of the front door as it opened and closed told him that someone was leaving, hurriedly.

Presently, a boy's trim figure, clad in the best of upper Bridgeboro's clothes, emerged on the

porch, came down the steps and along the walk with almost a running step. Too eagerly did that hand reach and open the rickety gate, Terry thought. Too eagerly did he turn up Henry Street past the old, wooden picket fence, giving covert glances to the right and left. Then quite contentedly he smiled, as if to assure himself that he hadn't really been seen.

But Terry saw him and chuckled with delight, then suddenly stopped, and wondered.

CHAPTER VII

A DISCUSSION

Hardly had the boy gone out of sight before Marshall sauntered down the steps and out to the sidewalk. He strolled leisurely up the street to his own home, a block above. Terry came out from behind the tree and hurried home, thoughtfully.

Dinky and Pip were both there, energetically removing a pile of dead ashes from Andy's little front room stove and the full coal basket was on the floor near by. Terry sat down in the plush chair and whisked his rowdy-looking little cap over on the gas jet that projected out of the side wall.

"Now what do you s'pose that Rollie Terhune is doing hanging out with Tuck Marshall, huh?" he asked.

Pip sat back on his haunches, the stubby end of a broken poker hanging limply in his hand. Dinky stopped short on his way to the kitchen with a pan full of ashes which he let tip perilously to one side in his surprise.

"How do you expect us to s'pose anything about a fella like Rollie Terhune, huh?" Pip returned. "What's it about?"

Terry told them all he had heard and seen. "Even us kids ain't allowed to talk to Tuck," he said in conclusion. "And him saying that he sent us to Crossley's to keep us from snooping around sounds darn funny, believe me! I'm glad we didn't go now 'cause I wouldn't have heard what I did. I could tell that Rollie knew it was wrong to be talking to Tuck—man, it sounds as if he wasn't such a goody-good after all, huh?"

"Maybe he doesn't know what a no-good fella Tuck is," said little Dinky, sweeping up the ashes he had spilled.

"Well, then he must be a Rip Van Winkle," said Pip, "because anyone that doesn't know about Tuck must have been asleep for ten years. My mother says he's given his people

more trouble than all of us fellas put together. We know that too."

"They met there on purpose, that's what," said Terry, thoughtfully. "I'd like to know what they said before I came."

"Maybe he just thinks it's smart to get in with a tough fella like Tuck," said Pip. "Maybe he thinks Tuck belongs to our gang and he wants to get in with us, huh?"

"Well, we're not like Tuck and he needn't think we are!" exclaimed Terry, proudly. "If he comes down here again, I'll tell him."

"Aw, we should worry about Rollie," said Pip, in his matter-of-fact way. "Anyhow we got fifteen cents each out of Tuck."

Terry's face brightened. "We'll go to the movies, what do you say, huh?" he asked, delightedly.

"'S afternoon?" asked Dinky, beaming.

"Yeah," said Terry. "You play cry-baby for Mr. Hinkel and we'll get some candy with your fifteen cents, huh?"

Dinky nodded.

Terry sat comfortably back in the chair and watched Pip making the fire while Dinky went

around the shack, picking up odds and ends of his leader's possessions that were lying about. This they had done for countless Saturdays since the gang had been formed and they seemed to enjoy it. Terry took the tribute with as much dignity as he could muster and secretly loved their attentions for it was the nearest approach he had ever had to luxury.

Saturday was a half-holiday for Andy, also pay day. For Terry it was, like Sunday, a feast day. They always dined quite sumptuously and cared little how they might fare the rest of the week.

So today they were feasting and Terry was almost delirously happy. Andy had even bought a new piece of shiny, clean-smelling oilcloth for the kitchen table. Its pungent odor mingled with the appetizing aroma of ham-bologna and fresh rye bread. This was "topped off," as Andy expressed it, with thick luscious pieces of chocolate cake bought at Sam's.

Terry rested his elbows comfortably on the table and looked across the white expanse of oilcloth while his uncle talked. "I seen that

no-account fella, Marshall, as I came in," the old man was saying between mouthfuls of cake. "Somehow when I see him hanging around this here neighborhood so loaferish like, I know he's lookin' for trouble."

"Um-mm," said Terry, taking up a piece of cake and swallowing it whole. He was thinking hard about Roland but decided not to say anything about him. "Tuck told me that Mr. Terhune owns our hang-out and all of Henry Street down to the tracks. Can you beat that?"

Andy reddened and shook his head from side to side. "It does beat all how a man can get so much together in a lifetime, don't it!" he said, wistfully. "To think he owns the roof that's over our heads, eh, Terry? Just to think. . . ."

"And all the time you thinking it's that real estate man on Main Street that you've been paying the rent to," Terry interposed, thoughtfully, then: "That makes that Rollie a kind of a boss over me, don't it?"

Andy shook his head and twiddled a stray crumb of cake around on the oilcloth. "Would

you like it if I was as rich as Rollie's grandfather, Terry?" he asked, timidly.

"Nope," said Terry, truthfully. "You'd be too strict with me and I wouldn't be able to put my elbows on the table. Rich fellas like Rollie is are even afraid to be seen coming down here—man, that'd be too much for me."

"But you'd be allowed to do other things that you've often said you wanted to do, Terry," Andy reminded him, gently. "Fer instance: you wouldn't have to go down to the coal yards and pick up chunks. I notice how you seem to like to have Dinky and Pip wait on you sort of and clean up the house for you. You're the kind of a boy that ought to have servants. You ought to be rich."

"I'd rather have you and Dinky and Pip," said Terry, loyally. "If they like to wait on me it's because I'm their leader and they show respect. And because I see how Rollie sneaks around and I don't want to be rich."

Andy got up from the table and began clearing away the remains of their meal. There was something pathetic looking about him as he trudged back and forth between the sink

and table. At intervals, he would steal a wistful glance at Terry who was still in deep contemplation of the advantages and disadvantages of being rich.

"So you still think you wouldn't like to get chummy with that Roland boy, eh, Terry?" he asked hesitantly.

"Nope," answered Terry, decisively, and rising. "I don't like him and I never will. Maybe he ain't so bad to talk to, but there's something about him that tells me he couldn't be a good pal like Pip or Dinky. That's all."

CHAPTER VIII

CRY-BABY

About two o'clock that same afternoon, Terry, Pip and Dinky hurried up Main Street. As they approached Hinkel's Haberdashery, Dinky dropped behind as per arrangements while his two companions proceeded straight on to the Elite Theatre which was just three doors above. There they lingered in the shadow of the gold and white ticket booth.

To a passerby they would have seemed to be idly gazing at the poster display on either wall of the lobby, but in reality they were watching Dinky intently as he stared in at the smart window display for which the Haberdashery is noted. Suddenly the little fellow sauntered into the shining, tiled entrance and peered quite wistfully through the broad, glass door at the ponderous features of the genial

Mr. Hinkel who was standing behind the counter at the front of the store.

In a little while, Dinky came out and again gazed at the window display only to stroll back into the entrance once more and give Mr. Hinkel a more appealing look than the first one. Gradually his eyes grew quite moist until two tears plopped out of them, one landing upon his right cheek and the other on the bridge of his small nose. The haberdasher, unable to withstand this pathetic scene longer, came from behind the counter and out into the entrance to the little fellow's side.

"Well, well, Dinky boy," said the big, amiable man, "what's the tears for today, eh? Movie money?"

Dinky twisted his right foot around bashfully, and nodded. The tears had miraculously ceased and his face was beaming.

Mr. Hinkel laughed uproariously and took the boy by the shoulders, affectionately. "Dinky boy," he said, "if it wasn't for you and Terry and Pip, this would be a dead old town."

Dinky grinned, happily. "We'll always do lots for you, Mr. Hinkel," he said.

"Don't I know that:" said Mr. Hinkel, digging deep into his pocket and getting some change. A quarter of it he handed to Dinky. "Here you are, son."

Dinky shook his head. "Just fifteen cents, Mr. Hinkel—that's all it is," he said, a little abashed.

Mr. Hinkel put the quarter into Dinky's palm and closed his own generous hand over it. "I know it, son," he said, with a ring of feeling in his voice. "The other ten cents is extra for wriggling yourself into my pocket." He took off the little fellow's cap and tousled his hair, replaced it with a smile and walked back into his shop with a light, springy step.

Dinky called goodbye to him and waved his small hand frantically as the kindly man closed the door. Then he raced out of the entrance and on to the Elite Theatre with a sort of prancing step as he called out the news of his good fortune. Terry and Pip came out from the shadow of the ticket booth immediately and

stared, entranced, at the shining quarter which had been held out for their inspection.

"Say, ain't that swell now:" exclaimed Terry, joyously. "Honest, we ain't had such good luck since Christmas."

"It's been a pip of a day, so far," said Pip. "What'll we buy—all candy or divide up on crackers and fruit?"

"Whatever Terry says we'll have," said Dinky, like the loyal subject he was."

Terry grinned, agreeably pleased. "All right," he said. "To please us all we'll buy three ice cream cones and ten cents worth of candy, huh?"

They were all pleased and marched triumphantly two doors farther on and into Zeller's Home of Sweets. When they came out, each carried a golden brown cone, lusciously crisp and topped with a delicate mound of strawberry ice cream. Dinky firmly clasped a bag in his left hand that contained ten cents worth of chocolate buttons.

Terry chuckled happily and walked up to the theatre booth. When he had procured three tickets, he turned to join his companions in

the lobby and was startled to find that Mr. Ellsworth smilingly barred his way.

Terry was plainly disconcerted for a moment. He could feel Dinky and Pip eyeing him anxiously while Mr. Ellsworth looked from one to the other, smiling complacently. There was something about the man's smile that made them all feel uncomfortable.

"Well, well," said Mr. Ellsworth at length, "you boys are having a gay time on a gray afternoon, eh?"

"Yep," Terry managed to say.

"Little Dinky here ought to go into the movies," smiled Mr. Ellsworth. "I was standacross the street watching your little act. He almost made me cry too. Mr. Hinkel seems very fond of him."

"Yeah," said Pip, when words failed Terry. "He likes all of us, Mr. Hinkel does."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Ellsworth, a little less smilingly. "I suppose Terry, here, was coach of Dinky's splendid performance, eh?"

"Sure, I was," said Terry, vociferously, once again master of himself. "I taught Dinky how to do it a couple of years ago. I used to

do it myself 'till I got too big so you see I'm not lying about anything."

"I know that, Terry," Mr. Ellsworth said, kindly. "That's why I'm hopeful of you being a scout—your truthfulness is refreshing."

"That's one thing Andy taught me that I remember," said Terry, proudly.

"It's something to remember, Terry," said the scoutmaster. "How do you feel about the scouts now?"

"Same as I did before," answered Terry, frankly. "They got to show me first and they got to be pals with me like Pip and Dinky are."

Mr. Ellsworth pursed his lips and studied the small smudge on Terry's strong-looking chin. "We'll show you, Terry," he said, whimsically, "if you'll only come up and let us show you."

"I'll come if that Rollie ain't going to be head of the patrol," said Terry, vociferously. "That's when I'll come!"

"Oh, come now," said the scoutmaster, smiling. "Roland isn't the snob that you think he is. A trifle wilful and spoiled perhaps, but if

you'd only give him a chance to get acquainted with you, you'd change your mind most likely. You believe in fair play, do you not, Terry?"

"No one can ever say I don't play fair!" Terry protested. "No one can say that."

"Well, then, don't let anyone ever say it," Mr. Ellsworth returned. " Give Roland a chance to get acquainted with some of you chaps down on Henry Street. He's looking for four new members in his patrol and we talked it over last meeting night. I mentioned you fellows. Now play fair if he's good enough to come down and see you, won't you, Terry?"

Terry nodded, unwillingly. "I'll try, but honest, I can't promise you exactly how I'll feel about him," he said, naively.

Mr. Ellsworth laughed. "Well, that's a sort of promise, anyhow," he said, and bidding them goodbye, he left the lobby.

Terry, Dinky and Pip were soon lost in the dim gorgeousness of the Elite Theatre. After a moment or two of thoughtful hesitation, Mr. Ellsworth turned and walked straight toward Hinkel's Haberdashery.

CHAPTER IX

AND THAT'S THAT

"Well," said Mr. Hinkel, in his most hearty business manner, "what can I do for you?"

Mr. Ellsworth coughed discreetly. "There's just a few questions I'd like to ask you, Mr. Hinkel," he said, pleasantly. "They concern the welfare, and, ah—the good conduct of that little rapscallion, Terry Dunn, and his companions."

"Dinky and Pip, you mean?" asked Mr. Hinkel.

"I guess those are the names they answer to," Mr. Ellsworth answered. "I happened to be standing across the street a few minutes ago and saw that little Dinky as you call him. . . ."

Mr. Hinkel's hearty laughter resounded throughout the store. "Well, well," he said, after he had regained his composure. "Don't you think that that Dinky boy is the cutest kid the way he collaborates with Terrible Terry?"

"What?" asked Mr. Ellsworth, clearly surprised. "You mean to say you know he was fooling you—that they were all fooling you—the three of them?"

Mr. Hinkel threw back his head and gave way to several hearty guffaws. "Sure, I knew it," he laughed. "I always knew it. Those kids have been playing that trick with me for a couple of years. Terry did it first and then I guess he got too big to cry so he must have coached little Dinky in the role. But I get as much of a kick out of it now as I did in the beginning. I understand them and they understand me. They know I'm on to Dinky's hokum, but they go on playing it 'cause they know I like it. Sakes alive, I wouldn't say a word to them or have them say a word to me about it for anything. It'd clean break the spell of the fun."

"Well, in that case, I can see your point,"

said Mr. Ellsworth. "But don't you think it—er—encourages dishonesty in them?"

"Not at all—not at all," answered Mr. Hinkel, jovially. "Those kids ain't got a dishonest hair in their heads. They're full of ol' Harry and as human as can be, but they know right from wrong, believe me! If you could come around here about three hours from now you'd see one of 'em sweeping up the sidewalk and the other two dusting up my stock boxes in the back room that would never get dusted otherwise. And what's more, if it wasn't for them kids there's a whole lot else around this store that wouldn't get done.

"Well, well . . ." Mr. Ellsworth began.

"Yes, and they won't take a red cent for it either," the haberdasher interposed. "If they play their little cry-baby act maybe once a week why I'll never kick 'cause they do more than fifteen cents worth of work for it."

Mr. Ellsworth shook his head. "That's the greatest I ever heard," he said. "And yet, somehow one would expect just that of Terry Dunn. You know, Mr. Hinkel, I've already thrown out the net to get them in the scouts.

I'm especially interested in Terry—he's an interesting example of how a boy can practically bring himself up. His uncle is a kind-hearted old fellow, but he doesn't know discipline from a thunder storm."

"Yes, I've heard that, too," said Mr. Hinkel, affably. "But that kid, Terry, ain't nobody's fool. If you're lucky enough to land them in your troop, Mr. Scoutmaster, I'll say you got three kids worth while."

Mr. Ellsworth left Hinkel's Haberdashery, feeling that the time had been well spent. He had learned a great deal from Mr. Hinkel and was glad that he hadn't jumped at his first conclusion regarding Terry's cry-baby game. For a moment, he stood thoughtfully looking up and down Main Street and finally decided that he would go down, feeling that a visit to Henry Street might also prove interesting.

Meanwhile Terry, Pip and Dinky, sitting in the front row of the Elite Theatre, were completely captivated by the first scenes of the "all talkie" picture called *The Raven's Revenge.*

Just behind, and filling a row to its full ca-

pacity, sat most of the members of the First Bridgeboro Troop, B. S. A. All of the patrols were represented, particularly the Raven Patrol, whose enthusiasm for the picture was rather biased because of its title. That is the assertion that many members of the troop had teasingly made and during the first half of this stirring melodrama an occasional low chuckle could be heard, after which a thundering voice would hoarsely whisper, "*Shut up!*"

Terry, pretending that he was annoyed, but in reality curious, turned his head around just enough to see that the owner of the voice was quite a diminutive scout, with curly hair and a terrible frown on his chubby features.

"Hmph!" exclaimed Terry, disgustedly. "Does he—do they think they own this place! Man, they make enough noise." Secretly, he envied this happy smiling group and wished that he was leader of a gang just as large.

"They seem to have a lot of fun, though," Pip whispered.

"Not as much as us," contended Terry.

"Aw, I know that. But I mean, for scouts they have a lot of fun. Don't you think so?"

"Maybe," answered Terry. "We could teach 'em a few things, though."

"Oh, sure," said Pip. "I kind of like that scoutmaster, though. Even if he did catch us making Dinky play cry-baby, he didn't say much about it. For a guy that's mixed up with scouts, he ain't a crank—you got to admit that."

"He's nice to us because he wants us to get in the scouts, that's what," said Terry, stoutly. "Nobody fools me, and if he thinks I'm going to put on a scout suit and march like a donkey behind Rollie, he's mighty mistaken."

"You promised him you'd play fair," Pip reminded him.

"I didn't have to promise that," said Terry, "because I play fair, anyway, don't I? But I couldn't promise him how I'll feel about Rollie, could I? If he proves he ain't a sissy and can be a good pal, why, that'll be different."

"*Silence, please!*" commanded a passing usher.

And silence there was until after *The Raven* had had his revenge. Then the lights went up for a short intermission, during which the or-

gan groaned blatantly and the sound of restless shuffling feet and boyish whistling grew in intensity. Before the music had ceased, pandemonium reigned and the calls for silence from the perspiring management had no effect whatsoever.

Our three heroes from Henry Street, however, had no part in this chaos, being thoroughly intent upon consuming what was left of the chocolate buttons in the bag lying limply on Dinkey's lap. After it was empty and relegated to the floor, Terry turned around in his seat and viewed the motley assemblage of scouts behind with an air of cool superiority. His deep, blue eyes scanned each face along the row and finally rested upon the round face of the scout who possessed "the voice."

For a few seconds, the scout looked frowningly upon the inquisitive Terry, then his face lighted up in a huge smile. "You don't know who I am," he said, informally. "I'm Walter Harris and I know who you are. You're Terrible Terry and you made me cry so hard Hallowe'en night that I couldn't see what I was

eating and I'd just got hold of a swell piece of cake, too—gee whiz!"

"That's the best thing you ever did, Terry," said another sparkling-eyed scout who answered to the name of Roy Blakeley. "You're the only gink that ever made Pee-wee throw away a piece of cake. Baby, that was some stunt—throwing those tear bombs, because you saved all of us from getting a sick stomach from the cake that the kid's sister made. But don't think I was glad to be saved from being sick—you didn't do me any good turn, believe me. I was counting on eating a whole lot so that I wouldn't have to go to school the next day."

"Don't listen to him because he's a crazy fool and everybody knows it," shouted Pee-wee, adding greatly to the din. "I saw you first when you just now turned around and that gives me a right to talk more to you than he does."

"Begin from the end and he'll know what you're talking about," laughed Roy.

"Shut up!" shouted Pee-wee, scowling darkly at Roy.

A grin played at the corners of Terry's mouth. "Whatcha want to talk to me about, huh?" he asked, liking Pee-wee immensely.

"Mr. Ellsworth wants you fellers down in Henry Street to join up with us," answered Pee-wee, frankly.

"Yeah, tell me something I don't know," said Terry, with a hint of boredom in his tones. "That doesn't say we're going to join though, does it?"

"No," said Pee-wee, warming up to his subject, "but you could do lots of things if you were a scout and learn how to be primitive and how not to starve in the woods and things like that."

"I don't have to go in the woods to learn things like that," Terry contended. "I learn how to have fun with my gang here and that's all I care about. Huh, Pip? Huh, Dink?"

Pip and Dinky wagged their heads like overgrown puppies.

"I bet you do have fun at that," Pee-wee said, always just. "I bet you could even teach us something about fun just the same as we could teach you fellers lots of things."

"Yeah, but I could teach you more, I bet," said Terry, boasting.

The organ trilled a few ear-splitting chords preparatory to its finale. Pee-wee stirred. "Gee whiz, we'd like it if you fellers 'll come in our troop. We'd have some fun with you on hikes, I bet. Even I bet you know how to do tricks."

"Sure," said Terry, in his element. "I know the egg trick. Do you know the egg trick?"

"Nope," Pee-wee was forced to admit. "Maybe you'll teach me if you come next meeting night and join. They're getting up the Chipmunk Patrol again and I used to be leader of it only it busted up on account of I couldn't get enough fellers in it. They're looking for four new fellers now and Rollie Terhune's the leader and he wants you fellers because they think it'll be nice how you could get a lot of things for nothing. Sometimes even going away to Temple Camp for all summer, free. Rollie would like it if he could get the patrol full by next meeting because his grandfather'll donate a lot of money and give them a cabin

up in Temple Camp next summer. Gee whiz, you'll be lucky if you join Rollie's patrol, all right."

"I won't join any patrol until I can be leader," Terry announced, stoutly. "I'm leader of my own gang, and if they're satisfied with me, why should I quit them and let somebody boss me that I don't know, huh?"

"Gee whiz, nobody bosses you in a patrol even if they are leader," Pee-wee explained, vociferously. "Even you could still be leader of your own gang if you joined the scouts and besides you can't be leader of a patrol right away—gee whiz! You have to know something about scouting and maybe it won't take you long to learn, so will you come up and join, huh?"

"Nope," answered Terry, decisively, "not unless I can be leader."

CHAPTER X

LOYALTY

Any appeal that Pee-wee would have liked to make was cut short by the dimming of the lights and the immediate showing of the comedy. Terry had once again slouched down into his seat, giving himself up to the farcical gestures and sounds before his eyes. He loved comedy best of all, especially the kind that featured pie-throwing. Pie was such a luxury in his life that he was captivated with the idea of anyone regarding it so cheaply as to be able to throw it to the four winds.

"That's all I ever want to get rich for," he confided to Pip, as the pie-throwing ended and a Newstone brought them weird sounds of a football game. "Just once, I want to throw a nice, big custard pie at that crabby watch-

man down at the yards. If I ever get rich that's the first thing I'll do."

"Yeah," Pip agreed, "so would I. He deserves it, but anyway we fooled 'em today—boy, how we fooled 'em."

"It's too bad some of these scouts weren't there to see us get away," Terry said, regretfully. "I bet they never ran in their whole lives like we ran today." Victory was never as sweet to Terry as when attended by an appreciative audience.

The matinee came to an end and before the large theatre was flooded with light Terry, Pip and Dinky had slunk quite noiselessly down into the orchestra pit, through the little door under the stage and thence out to the rear exits.

An alert electrician espied them just as they reached the door, but they made it safely despite his efforts to prevent them. In truth, they had always managed to make it safely and the mechanic always chuckled afterward just as he did now, for he secretly enjoyed their unceremonious departure after the Saturday matinee. He thought it was nothing short of genius for

them to have adopted that means of exit in order to get out before anyone else.

Terry reached home in a state of high exhiliration. The afternoon had gone off splendidly and his little talk with the scout, Peewee Harris, lingered pleasantly in his memory, despite his inability to admit it to his companions. He felt that it would be nothing short of weakness to confess that scouts and scouting were beginning to interest him. Therefore, it can be easily understood that his mood was particularly receptive to the subject that Andy immediately opened upon his return to the shack.

"A fine man that Mr. Ellsworth is, Terry," the old man said, as he prepared the evening meal.

"How do you know he is?" asked Terry.

"He was here this afternoon."

"Hey—what?"

"He was here this afternoon to see me," Andy repeated, not without a touch of pride in the announcement.

"To see *you!* Man, what for?"

"About you, kind of," Andy admitted with

a slow smile stealing over his withered old cheeks. "A fine man. . . ."

"Yeah, I know," Terry interposed, impatiently. "I s'pose he wanted you to say I'd join the scouts, huh?"

"He likes you, Terry," Andy answered evasively. "He thinks you're a fine type of a boy. A little rough and mischievous, maybe, he says, but good and true and loyal. Those are his very words, Terry."

Terry sniffed audibly and arched his pug nose, impudently. "You'd think he was talking about a girl," he said, gazing about the kitchen. Suddenly he remembered that his cap was still on his head, and with a swift gesture he removed it and sent it flying across the room. It landed with an absurd air of dignity, directly atop the water faucet.

Andy shook his head, removed the cap and threw it upon a hook on the far wall. "I declare, you're a caution, Terry," he said in the tones of an indulgent mother. "You do need to be a scout just to learn you how to be neat and orderly."

"That's not good grammar, Andy," said

Terry. "I got two demerits in school once for saying someone learned me a thing. It's *teach* —that's the word. Anyhow, what could the scouts teach me if I didn't want to be taught, huh?"

"That's just it, Terry," Andy said, rather imploringly now. "You're getting old enough to want to be taught them things. You can't go on always like this. I got a good idea this afternoon of what the scouts does for kids like you. Kids that ain't got such a bright future. You know what I mean, Terry—I'm too old to do much for you and first thing you know you'll have to shift for yourself and earn what you can. That won't be much, I can tell you, because these days you got to have some brains to get anywhere. Not that I think you ain't got brains—you have. But you have to be learnin' now while you're young."

If Terry was listening, his attitude did not convey such an impression. He was sitting up close to the little kitchen table and idly scratching with his rusty penknife along the edge of the new table oilcloth. Andy, however, was not disturbed by this obvious show of indifference

on his nephew's part, for he knew that the boy had an amazing faculty of doing many things at once.

"Why, that Mr. Ellsworth," he went on patiently, "he told me of a fella in the scouts by the name of Tom Slade. . . ."

"I heard of him—I even saw him once," said Terry, without removing his knife from the suffering oilcloth.

"Yeh, well he's a good example of what the scouts do for kids," Andy continued. "Mr. Ellsworth said he was a kid lots worse than you—I mean this Tom Slade used to do everything he shouldn't do. Besides, his father was a no-good fella and they lived in that Barrel Alley that was torn down when you were a little youngster. It was ten times worse than Henry Street, Terry, and yet this Tom Slade got into the scouts and now he's got sort of a official position or something with them. They say he's a grand fella—that's what Mr. Ellsworth told me."

"Yeah," said Terry, folding up the knife and putting it back in his trousers pocket. "He ain't no sissy either, I could tell that."

"Well now, just think o' that," said Andy, wagging his head from side to side and smiling delightedly. "If he could be a somebody like that, you could too."

"I can be a somebody without being a scout, if that's what you mean," Terry said. "Man, you don't think they're the only guys on earth, do you?"

"No, but Terry," Andy protested, pitifully, "can't you see how it is with us—I mean *me,* so poor and all, and here this Mr. Ellsworth is taking an interest in you. It'll be like an education for you and most of all you'll get in with boys that amount to something."

"Do you say Pip and Dinky don't amount to anything?" Terry asked, loyally.

"I didn't mean that, Terry," Andy said, apologetically. "They're two nice boys and they got nice manners considering how hard their folks have got it, too. No, I meant that they'd be better, too, if they joined the scouts. I ain't always had such a clear conscience about you, Terry. I ain't been able to give you what you ought to have and yet I sort of got so's I couldn't give you up so you would

have better care and all. I've been selfish in keeping you with me—even now I can't give you up!"

Andy took up a fork and walked with pathetic slowness over to the stove. He sighed deeply as he pushed the long prongs into the potatoes to see if they were done. When he turned around, Terry was startled to see a mist of tears in those old eyes.

"What's matter, Andy?" the boy asked, feeling a lump rise in his throat. "Did I make you feel bad or something?"

"No, Terry boy. You've been as good as gold to me—always. I—I—it's just that the scouts is the only way I'll feel right about you. *The only way,*" he muttered, as if he had spoken those words many times before.

"Man, Andy, *man!*" breathed Terry. "I'd do most anything for you, but—aw, heck. . . ."

Andy fumbled with the long fork which he had just used. His pale, yellowish skin became suffused with color and he shambled over to the table. "You wouldn't think your uncle Andy was a coward, would you, Terry?" he asked, humbly.

Terry looked straight at him, nonplussed. "Man, I don't know what I ever thought about you," he answered, in his frank, boyish way. "But I don't s'pose it counts much if people are cowards when they're old, does it, Andy. I'd like you even if you were a coward, so you should worry."

Andy wagged his head, forlornly. "It's no use, Terry," he said, "you don't understand what I mean and I ain't got gumption enough yet to tell you. Maybe some day. . . . Anyhow, promise me you'll be better about this scout business. Your mama and papa would say for you to go into it if they were in this house now."

"Aw, I know, Andy," protested Terry, "but it's hard on a guy that's leader of his own gang to go somewhere and let others boss him. Especially, Rollie. I won't stand for him being boss over me, that's all. Like I told that Harris fella in the movies—if they'll let me be leader I'll join."

Andy shuffled off into the tiny living room and soon reappeared, carrying a small book in his trembling hands. "Here, Terry," he said,

proffering it timidly. "This is the Scout Handbook and Mr. Ellsworth left it for you to read. I was looking it over while I waited for you to come home. It has some grand ideas in it—I never saw the like of it in my day."

Terry looked down at the small book, scornfully. He took it rather gingerly and let it lie on his knee without opening it. "What else did Mr. Ellsworth say?" he asked at length.

Andy hurried over to the stove and dished up the potatoes before answering. He fumbled with the dishes, put a chair in its place and finally sat down.

"What else did he say?" repeated Terry, shrewdly, for he sensed that his uncle was holding back something.

"He said he wanted you to read it and then go to see him," answered Andy, shyly. He'll have something to say to you, Terry—that's what he told me."

"Maybe that means he'll chuck Rollie out and make me leader, huh?"

Andy sighed and shook his head. "I can't seem to make you have sense about that, Terry," he said, wearily. "You can't be

everything all at once. You wasn't leader of your gang right off, was you?"

"Yep," answered Terry, proudly. "When Pip and Dinky and me made it up to call ourselves the Henry Street Gang, why right off the bat they said I should be leader because I said I knew how we could go and break some of the windows in Connover's old empty factory, without the cops seeing us."

"Oh me, oh my," sighed Andy, "don't that prove that you need to have them scouts show you what's right and what's wrong, eh? A fine man like Mr. Ellsworth'd make a man of you. Promise me you'll read that book and think it over good, eh, Terry?"

"I'll promise to read the book and think it over, Andy. But I won't join the scouts unless I can be leader," said Terry, for the third and last time that day.

CHAPTER XI

THAT NIGHT

There were several reasons why Terry didn't venture outdoors that night. One reason was that a last-of-the-winter's snowstorm was being driven along by a terrific March gale. Another was that Pip and Dinky were not allowed out after eight o'clock on Saturday night (that being the night that Henry Street bathed), and last, but not least, Andy had pleaded with him to stay in for "just this night."

This of course, smashed all precedent, for never before in their lives together, had Andy ever requested anything so drastic of Terry. Naturally, he was quite taken by surprise.

"What's the idea?" he asked, not meaning any disrespect to his uncle.

"Well, for one thing, it's such a bad night, Terry."

"And ain't I been out in worse storms than this?"

"You sure have, boy," answered Andy patiently. "But I got a better reason—it's for your own good—Mr. Ellsworth said I shouldn't let you stay up so late o' nights. He—he said it was right bad for your health and I come to realize all of a sudden that it is. You sure are kind of thin, boy, come to think of it."

"Yeah," said Terry, looking as if he didn't know whether to laugh or frown. "Did Mr. Ellsworth say what else would be good for me?"

"Now, Terry," Andy implored, "everything he said was for your own good. He said you were nothing but a growing boy and needed your sleep o' nights instead of roaming and. . . ."

"Throwing tear bombs to break up scout parties, huh?" Terry asked, sulkily. "Now ain't that what he told you, Andy?"

Andy nodded, hopelessly.

"Just what I thought. Even if I do like him, I'm not going to let him boss me. *You* don't even boss me!"

"It's my fault that I don't," said Andy, fearfully. "Now it's hard for you to take a little—er—advice from grown-ups what know things better'n you. I got myself to blame—it's like as if I was more your brother the way I always treated you. Not like an uncle, that's sure."

"Well, we ain't never had a fight, have we?" asked Terry, with all the naive inconsistency resulting from his carefree upbringing.

Andy could not suppress a smile. "And we ain't going to fight about anything now," he said, gently. "You're going to mind your old uncle when he tells you things for your own good. It'll give me peace of mind that I did something good for you in my life. So go to bed, eh, Terry?"

"For you I will," said Terry, firmly, "but not on Mr. Ellsworth's account. I'm kind of sore at him now."

"All right, Terry, boy," said Andy, putting on his threadbare overcoat, smilingly content to let well enough alone. "Sleep well and maybe tomorrow you'll read that book, eh?"

"Yep."

Andy walked to the door with a lighter step and before he went out into the stormy night, he turned and smiled confidently at his nephew. Then the door shut and Terry listened as he scuffled through the snow on his way down to Sam's.

That was Andy's only recreation, smoking his pipe every Saturday evening from eight o'clock until sometimes past midnight with his neighbors in the popular Sam's Cash Grocery. Terry had never minded the time that his uncle spent there—he had never been home to mind it.

But Terry minded it now. The clock hands were winding their tortuous way around the dial and still only fifteen minutes had passed. He told himself that it was nothing short of being sissified to go to bed so early.

And yet he had promised Andy. . . .

The thought started him undressing but during the whole process, little voices, somewhere down in the depths of his being, whispered of what he should and would be doing at that precise moment if he hadn't had to

stay in. This, his first encounter with obedience, was painful indeed.

He lay in bed, uncomfortably. The clock struck the hour and he was sorely tempted to get up and play marbles. He could easily shout out of the back door for Pip to come over and join him too. But after five minutes of pondering the problem he resisted and conquered the demon Temptation.

In deference to his uncle he stayed quietly in bed, but in defiance of Mr. Ellsworth's command that he should sleep, he reached out and grasped the Handbook that had been lying neglected on the old oaken stool just beside the bed.

He did not take up the book because of any sudden resolve to set his feet in the paths that Mr. Ellsworth would approve of. He would have taken up a dime novel as eagerly if it had been there. Fortunately, nothing of the sort had ever found its way under Andy's roof, and more fortunate was it that the boy had never been home long enough to desire that kind of reading. It was simply a stroke of good for-

tune that the first printed pages he had ever turned with a serious intention of reading were the pages that contained the simple truths of scouting.

It may be safely recorded that from that night on, Terry became a scout—in theory. And furthermore, his interest in the Handbook was another triumph for scouting for he did not take his eyes from the romantic pages until just before his uncle opened the front door, close on to one o'clock in the morning.

He had taken the precaution to turn the gas light down quite low a few minutes before. But it had all been unnecessary, he soon realized, as Andy entered the house in such a state of excitement that he wouldn't have noticed whether the light was up high or entirely out. Indeed, he seemed unaware that his nephew was still very wide awake in spite of certain gentle admonitions earlier that evening.

"What's matter, Andy?" the boy asked, eagerly.

"Been great doin's down at Sam's just before," answered the old man, shaking the snow

off his threadbare coat. He walked over to the light and tried to warm his numb hands over the meager flame that issued from the jet. "Greatest excitement I ever did see in a long time."

"What?"

"Police down there," answered Andy, and stopped for breath, "and they questioned every man of us if we had seen that no-account Tucker Marshall tonight. Lan' sakes, they was as mad as could be 'cause they hadn't a gosh-hanged bit of luck up to Marshall's house."

Terry sat up in bed. *"Man—what?"*

"It's just what you think, Terry," Andy answered, sitting down on the stool to undress. "The cops wouldn't tell us why they wanted him but I got a hunch and after I left Sam's I walked up a bit past Marshall's and I seen a light. I knocked on the door, too."

"Ooo-man!"

"Yeh, Mrs. Marshall came to the door and she was all upset. She told me she thought it was the police—they had been there twice since eleven o'clock, she said, and they was wanting to know what time Tuck went out and what

time she expected him back. She said she told 'em she never expected him back until he was right in the house—poor woman. It ain't her fault, I guess, that he's turned out like he has."

"What else?"

"Well, he robbed Terhunes' place," Andy answered falteringly. "That's what the police told Mrs. Marshall. They said that old Mr. Terhune saw him running away—he recognized him even. But they ain't caught him and I s'pect they won't. He's too slick. Anyway, I'm glad you were in the house tonight, Terry. I'd ruther be dead now than think you'll ever turn out like him."

"Man, I got better sense," Terry said, vehemently. "I'm not such a fool."

"Well, it pays to keep clear o' the law, Terry, boy," said Andy, wistfully. "Even if a fella never gets caught he gets punished for not doing right. He punishes himself by never being able to forget about it. So, always be careful, won't you, boy?"

"Don't worry about me, Andy," Terry answered, proudly. "I'm goin' to be different—

I made up my mind. I was reading that Handbook.''

''Good,'' said Andy, divesting himself of his week-end collar and tie. For a moment he was unusually thoughtful, then: ''Who do you think came past me after I left Marshall's house, Terry?''

''Who?''

''Well, to begin from the beginning, I saw a boy just your size comin' up from Hunter's,'' said Andy, puzzled. ''He was comin' along fast and he didn't think I recognized him either, but I did: I bet his grandpop would give him Old Ned if he knew he was out at such hours and down in this neighborhood. It beats all with kids these days—even the rich ain't got any discipline over their youngsters.''

''Who you talking about, Andy?''

''That Rollie Terhune,'' answered Andy, looking pathetically old and thin in his long nightshirt. ''What do you s'pose he was doing down here this time o' night and in all this storm?''

''Man, I couldn't tell you,'' answered Terry, truly puzzled.

CHAPTER XII

ORGANIZING

The robbery and Tucker Marshall's disappearance was still the foremost thought in Andy's mind next morning, but the same could not be said of Terry. He had lost all interest in the affair because of a weighty problem that concerned his own personal ambitions.

Before Andy had awakened that morning, Terry was absorbing the Handbook. At breakfast, he kept it opened and standing against the sugar bowl a little to the left of his plate, and he digested a dozen or more words to every mouthful of food.

Andy beamed at what seemed to be the splendid results of his newly enforced discipline. "You'll be a credit to yourself, Terry," he said, rubbing his thin hands together. "Just keep on reading that book and do what it says.

Didn't you even read how it says what time you should go to bed?"

"Yeah, I read it," answered Terry, lightly. "That just says that for ordinary scouts like Pip and Dinky will be. But for leaders and those higher up it don't say how much sleep we have to get. You sort of have privileges when you're a leader. You can do as you please."

Andy's mouth opened a little, in astonishment. "Er—er, maybe I don't understand you, Terry," he said, "but from what Mr. Ellsworth said you'd climb up, sort of—I forget just what he called it when you first get to be a scout. Ah—oh yes, a tenderfoot and so on."

"So on, nothing," Terry said, contemptuously, "I don't care what Mr. Ellsworth said or anyone else! I got schemes of my own and it ain't being a tenderfoot either."

Andy was still practically in the dark. "You mean you ain't going to be a scout after all?" he asked, anxiously.

"Sure, I'm going to be a scout," answered Terry, "But not the kind you think or Mr. Ellsworth thinks. I got as much right to think

up schemes and things for scouting just the same as the Boy Scouts of America, haven't I?"

Andy was forced to admit that he had.

"Well, then," said Terry, in softer tones, "that's what I'm going to do. First I'm going to talk it over with Pip and Dink. When a fella's leader of a gang like I am he's got to talk things over first with his men."

Leaving Andy more mystified than ever, he strutted out of the back door and uttered a blood curdling whoop. Pip motioned from a back window of his home that he would be along in a moment, and it was even less than that when he came hurrying out with Dinky close at his heels.

"I got a scheme that'll knock your eyes out," Terry informed them, immediately. "We're going down to Hunter's and talk it over. Are we?"

"Sure," said Dinky and Pip in perfect accord.

They trudged down the snowy street silently, through Hunter's cellar-way and up into the kitchen. There Terry arranged the three soap-

boxes in as much of a circle as he could get them and sat leisurely down on one, motioning his solemn-faced followers to do the same.

"It's a good way to sit down and talk things over," he said, seriously. "I read where the Indians always sat around in a circle so's they could see each other's faces 'cause they could tell whether a fella was telling the truth that way. They called it a pow-wow."

"Yeh," said Pip, "and afterward some guys that had drums banged on them and all the pow-wowers got up and danced."

"Well, this pow-wow ain't going to have any dancing afterward," said Terry, decisively.

"I didn't mean that we should," said Pip, eager to make himself clear. "I meant that's what Indians did."

"All right," said Terry, drawing the Handbook out of his coat pocket. "I've been reading this thing ever since last night, and man, it's a wow!"

"Scouts?" asked Dinky, incredulously.

"Yeah," answered Terry. "I've changed my mind about them. They've got swell ideas for most fellas like you and Pip, only not for

me. I mean, they're all wrong about me having to be a tenderfoot and have somebody boss me when I've been leader of my own gang for three years, don't you say so?"

"Yeah, that's right," said Pip, agreeably.

Terry grinned, gratefully. "Well, anyhow, since I've been reading it I thought up a dandy scheme how I can be a scout and a patrol leader without joining the Boy Scouts of America."

"How?" Dinky ventured to ask.

"Easy as pie," answered Terry. "If they organized the Boy Scouts of America, why can't I organize the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro, huh?"

Pip's jaw dropped a trifle and Dinkey's eyes widened.

"You and Dink can start right in as tenderfeet," Terry rushed on, in the first flush of his grand scheme. "I have it planned that we'll do everything the book says. First, in school tomorrow I'm going to pick out what fellas I want to join, then afterward I'm going to stop in at Sam's and ask him if he'll let us deliver groceries for him on afternoons and Saturdays. He can hire the three of us cheaper than

that fresh guy he's got now and we can earn money to put in the bank just like it says in the book. I'll let you both read about it when I get finished. Everything's g o i n g to be done right."

"Yeah, but how about uniforms?" asked the matter-of-fact Pip. "We can't wear regular uniforms, can we?"

"Is that all you think about — *clothes!*" Terry chided, severely, but really in a quandary over that end of the scheme himself. His brow wrinkled thoughtfully, then "Anyway, we don't want to be exactly like them, do we? We can be scouts without uniforms, can't we?"

Pip and Dinky nodded, emphatically.

Suddenly Dinky spoke up. "Say, is it all right for us to start another organization—I mean it ain't a crime for us to call ourselves scouts as long as we don't take the same name and don't wear the same clothes, huh?" he asked, fearfully.

"Nope," answered Terry, with unmistakable assurance. "And another thing—anyone that says we can't be the Boy Scouts of Bridge-

boro, I'll fight to make 'em prove it! Do you or Pip say we can't be them?''

Pip and Dinky, of course, were loyal. Not only for the good of their health, but out of sheer affection for their tyrannical, yet lovable, leader.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST GOOD TURN

Terry was nothing if not progressive. He hadn't been in school more than a half hour on Monday morning, before a dozen notes, signed in his own flourishing scrawl, were being passed among those boys in his classroom whom he had selected as being the most promising material for the future Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro.

The notes were characteristic of Terry. They favored no single individual and were addressed, simply:

Lissen:

I'm getting up a new organisashon called the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro and it'll be like the Boy Scouts of America only a little different.

Anyway, I'm only going to charge you a nickel for joyning and you'll be saving money and getting as much as the Boy Scouts of America would give you—maybe more. It's

a bargain and besides you don't have to get no unaform just wear what you got on.

Those who'll joyn come to Hunter's empty house at five-thirty this afternoon, cause I got to be home at six every night now. It's a good turn.

Yours Truly,
Terry Dunn,
President B. S. B.
Scoutmaster "
Patrol Leader "

P. S. don't forget to
bring your nickel.
T. D.

After the notes were distributed satisfactorily, Terry bent his head down over his desk and studied the Handbook diligently. He had much more to learn (he even admitted this to himself), and as he must make a fair showing with scout language in front of the aspiring candidates that evening, he wasted not one moment of the study period.

Pip and Dinky in either corner of the room were also busy writing out some neglected homework for their leader. This was all in the very good cause of scouting.

At intervals, Terry lifted his eyes from the desk and looking blankly at the blackboard,

moved his lips intently. The history teacher who had charge of the study class that morning, fervently hoped that those lip movements were for her benefit, and that he was memorizing some of the dates that he had invariably failed on in every history examination that semester.

"A scout is courteous," chanted Terry into the ears of Hartley Povey, sitting just ahead and who was himself trying frantically to memorize some important facts about Stonehenge. "He is polite to all, especially to women and children and old people and the weak and helpless. *He must not take pay . . .*'

"Say, are you the only guy in this room or what?'" muttered Hartley Povey, fiercely. Flames seemed to leap from his eyes. "Anyway, what the heck are you ranting about, huh? *A scout is courteous!*" This was repeated sarcastically, for Hartley was not favored in Terry's list of candidates for scouting.

"What would you give to know what I'm ranting about, huh?" retorted Terry, completely ignoring the pointed shaft that Hartley had directed at him.

"I wouldn't give much, I'll tell you that!" answered Hartley. "I saw what you had in those notes and I wouldn't join a thing like that if I was asked twenty times."

Terry laughed, villainously. "You wouldn't be asked once, that's why you won't join," he said and let his eyes rest on the Handbook again. "For being helpful or courteous. He must not take pay for being helpful or courteous—*for being helpful or courteous.*"

"I'll tell," said Hartley in blind wrath, "if you keep up with that truck, I'll tell."

"Go lose yourself in the river," said Terry, lightly. Then in lower tones: "A scout is kind. He is a friend to animals. He will not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, but will strive to save and protect all harmless life—*but will strive to save and protect all harmless life, man!*"

He looked thoughtfully at the straggling hairs nestling in the nape of Hartley's bent neck, but his thoughts were really fixed upon another matter. For in repeating the last half of that sentence his mind had been converted

into a sort of S. P. C. A. In point of fact, he immediately visualized the hundreds and thousands of cats and dogs that were roaming about with staring, wistful eyes, waiting for him to strive and save their harmless lives.

A pin prick of conscience also disturbed his peace of mind when he thought of the many cats that he had tormented by winding paper about their four paws and fastening them securely with elastic bands. And the dogs that he had released on innumerable Hallowe'ens and other similar occasions, with fly-paper and tin cans fastened to their tails, came rushing back along the hectic path of memory, wagging their heads, appealingly, for him to repent before it was too late.

Terry straightened his string tie with determination and arose with purpose in his eyes as the noonday buzzer sounded throughout the school rooms. He whisked the Handbook into his pocket and slid gracefully along the smooth floor so as to be among the first group leaving the building.

He was looking intently to the right and left

for some sign of a four-legged creature when Dinky and Pip caught up to him. Terry immediately launched upon the subject of his unusual abstraction.

"It's just like I told you, yesterday," he said. "We've got to live up to everything. Now that I've read that about animals I saw I'd have to protect them and be kind or I won't be living up to all the laws. You fellas too, you feed all the hungry ones you see and after I get talking to Sam this afternoon and we get working for him, we'll be able to buy milk and things for them. Man, you can't say but what this scouting stuff is serious—it makes a fella think, huh?"

"Does Sam know anything about us working for him?" asked Pip, ever the practical one.

"Nope, not yet," answered Terry. "I'm going to spring it on him like a surprise and when I tell him what we'll work for, why, he'll chuck that Buff Collins in a minute. Buff can get a job uptown and with more money—he told me so himself."

"S'pose he won't want us?" asked Dinky, fearfully.

"Say," Terry assured him, "he won't pass up a chance like I'm going to offer him. Where'd he get three fellas like us to work for him for only a dollar and a half for week days and seventy-five cents for Saturdays, huh?"

"How'll we divide that up?" asked Pip.

"We'll talk that over after I see Sam," answered Terry.

Just then a flash of something black flew up the narrow alley alongside of Cornell's house, and a piercing "meow" followed in its wake. Terry was instantly alert and sped after the triumphant feline while Pip and Dinky went in search of the vanquished "meow."

Terry emerged presently from the alley, holding the offending party in his arms. Its eyes were considerably scratched up and great patches of white showed around its ears where the fur had been pulled out in the recent fray, but otherwise it was breathing normally.

Pip and Dinky were not successful. The party of the second part had completely van-

ished and a general dumping out of ash-cans and other receptacles in their search along the stretch of alley brought them nothing but harsh rebukes from irate housewives. When their own mothers joined the complaining group, they retreated back to Henry Street and entered their respective homes by means of the front doors.

Terry, however, held fast to the struggling cat and rushed into his house on wings of mercy. He ran breathlessly around until he found some iodine and with it sterilized the cat's many wounds. Then back into the kitchen he went, whistling gaily, and diluted a quarter of a can of condensed milk with some water which he poured into a saucer and set down upon the floor.

The cat walked leisurely over to it, sniffed a while, then greedily lapped up every drop. After that it crawled lazily into the front room, stretched itself out under the little stove and went to sleep. Terry watched it all, delighted, and feeling an insistent gnawing in his own stomach, made haste to fry himself an egg.

A sense of peace and contentment pervaded him for he felt that he had done his first good turn. And there wasn't the shade of a doubt in his mind but that he had, by this act, successfully launched himself into the field of scouting.

CHAPTER XIV

TIT FOR TAT

Math period came directly after lunch and it gave Terry little time to study on this most hated subject. He glanced longingly at Hartley Povey and was heartily sorry that he had not invited him to be a Boy Scout of Bridgeboro. Hartley never failed in math.

Terry squirmed in his seat, put his elbows on the desk and cupped his cheeks, comfortably. His mind fairly seethed with conflicting plans of how to get around his offended neighbor, but after five minutes of serious contemplation, he gave it up for lack of inspiration.

At this juncture, Hartley happened to pull a piece of paper out of his desk and with a flourish of his pen began writing something. Terry was immediately inspired and leaned

over close to Hartley's shoulder in a confidential attitude.

"Say, Hart," he said, by way of starting, "I didn't send notes to any of the fellas that I wanted to give an important scout job to. That's why I didn't send you one."

Hartley frowned in the manner in which one frowns at a fly. "Yeah!" he said, sarcastically. "How long did it take you to think that up, huh?"

Valiantly, Terry bit his tongue to hold his temper in check. "You can be scout scribe if you want to—that's what I mean. I'm having Pip as treasurer and Dinky, secretary."

"What's matter," jeered Hartley, "can't you do it all yourself?"

"What you mean?" Terry asked.

Hartley grinned, tauntingly. "Just that you don't seem to be treating yourself as well as you should," he answered. "When a fella starts out to be the whole works, he ought to stay that way. That's the way you started out—don't I know? Now you can be your own scout scribe or whatever you call it. Do it yourself!"

Miss Bunty, the math teacher, suddenly announced that the pupils would be free to study in her period as she was suffering with a headache. Homework would not be collected until the following day. Terry's heart pounded with joy and he turned triumphantly to the grouching Hartley.

"Do you think I really wanted you to be my scout scribe?" he asked, sarcastically. "That's a important position, if you want to know, and the fella I get for it's got to know how to write good and spell good. Like myself. Do you think I want a fella that writes like a chicken scratching in the back yard, huh? That's what you write like."

Hartley scowled. "You make me laugh, you do; you're a big bluff. Maybe I'm not such a swell writer, but you're worse. You might as well dump the ink right out on the paper and trace it with your finger. I bet you don't even know that there's a k in the word scribe."

Terry doubled up with forced laughter. "I know I don't," he said, smothering the yelps that threatened to make themselves heard, "be-

cause there ain't any k in scribe. It's a q that you're thinking of—oh, man!"

Hartley was not sure so he said nothing, but waited until Terry's unseemly mirth subsided in order to spring the little tidbit of news that he had been keeping back. Finally the moment arrived.

"I saw that scoutmaster," he said, slowly. "That Mr. Ellsworth—I saw him up on Main Street on my way back to school."

"Yeah," said Terry, indifferently. "What about it?"

"I told him how you were starting an organization of your own and all about it," Hartley answered with a malicious gleam in his eye. "I told him how I was willing to join that new Chipmunk patrol they're starting and he said he was glad to hear it. Even my mother said I could and she said it was better to join a real thing like that than an imitation one."

Terry flinched inwardly, then smiled. "You can't prove it's an imitation and, besides, that would go to say that me and Pip and Dinky are a pack of dummies. Just get me mad and I'll show you how much of a dummy I am. I even

did a scout good turn today and besides it was obeying one of the scout laws — that's how much of an imitation scout I am!"

"You did," said Hartley, curious in spite of himself. "What did you do?"

Terry told him.

"Do you have to take in cats and things and feed 'em?" Hartley asked, worriedly.

"Sure."

"Gee, my mother wouldn't have a cat in the house, no matter what. She wouldn't spend a cent to give 'em food. She says they're ungrateful and treacherous. So how will I be able to feed 'em then?"

"Well, you have to promise to do it when you take your scout oath," Terry said, exultantly. "That's what it says in the Handbook."

"Gee, that ain't fair. S'pose I fed 'em outside without my mother knowing it, huh?"

"Nope. You'd be violating a law then because the first law says you can't cheat and that's what you'd be doing to your mother. If you belonged to my organization you could bring all the cats and dogs you wanted to my house and I'd feed 'em for you."

Hartley was impressed for a moment. But only for a moment. "You're just saying that to get me in with your gang, ain't you, huh?" he asked suspiciously.

"Nope," answered Terry, thrilled that he was able to wield such power, "you said you wouldn't come and now you can't. Anyway, you had no business to tell Mr. Ellsworth."

Hartley could not hide the momentary shadow of disappointment that flitted across his face. He well knew that while the career of the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro might be a short one, it would not be lacking in glory or fun. Nothing that the terrible Terry Dunn concerned himself in had ever lacked that.

And Terry, while deploring the loss of a good nickel, was more than compensated by the expression of keen regret on Hartley's face.

CHAPTER XV

BUMPS

Terry was out of school that afternoon before the buzzer ceased quivering. He was intensely happy and walked into Sam's overstocked store, confident that the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro would be a sort of magic *open sesame* to all his plans.

When he emerged ten minutes later, he bore himself jauntily, notwithstanding the downcast look in his deep, blue eyes. Pip and Dinky were waiting patiently under the further end of the tattered, faded awning and felt a little apprehensive at their leader's thoughtful expression.

"What's matter?" asked Pip, anxiously. "Ain't there nothing doing with Sam, Terry?"

"Say," said Terry, indignantly. "Do you

'spect everything to come out right — right away, huh?"

Pip said he guessed that was right.

"A millionaire like that Rockefeller didn't make his money in ten minutes, did he?" Terry asked, tersely. "Honest, you fellas haven't any patience. I'm kind of disappointed too, but I'm not whining. Anyway, Sam isn't the only guy that has a grocery store. Just to get hunk on him I'll make Andy trade some place else."

"Sure," said Pip, sympathetically. "You ought to." Then: "What did Sam say, huh?"

"First off, he seemed to like the idea when I told him that if he fired Buff Collins he'd get three fellas to work for him for two dollars and a quarter a week. But when I told him that the three fellas was us he didn't look so happy."

"What's matter, don't he think we can work, huh?" asked Pip.

"Say, he wouldn't listen to anything else I said after that," Terry admitted, unwillingly. "All he said was that we were three harum-scarums and that he wouldn't trust his gro-

ceries to us. He said we'd get fooling on the way and that we'd forget to deliver them."

"Didn't you tell him about that we'd reformed, sort of—you know what I mean—that we'd be Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro?" asked Pip, anxiously.

"Sure, I did—what do you think! And no matter what I said he just laughed. He—he—" Terry stopped to scowl furiously, "he said that when we joined the Boy Scouts of America, why, he'd consider what I said. Huh, can you beat that? *Man!* Just as if to say t h a t I couldn't organize a thing myself, huh?"

Words couldn't express the contempt that Pip and Dinky felt for Sam. They stood glaring their hardest through the dirty plate glass window and fervently hoped that the Cash Grocery man would be moved to regret his decision. But that was impossible at the time for the store was filled with customers.

Pip, the practical, soon gave that up in order to talk of things more important. "How'll we get money, now?" he inquired.

"Don't you think I've been thinking about that!" Terry shouted. Then in lower tones:

DINKY RELEASED THE FEROCIOUS LOOKING CAT UPON ANDY'S KITCHEN FLOOR.

"If we can't get a job in a grocery why we'll have to save up our movie money."

"And my cry-baby money," interposed Dinky thoughtfully.

"Sure," said Terry, himself once again. "It'll take more than Sam to bust up my organization."

Which was very true, indeed.

Suddenly a rather ragged looking cat strutted out from under a pile of Sam's discarded boxes and Terry at once pounced upon it and straightway made for home. Pip and Dinky, also striving to save and protect all harmless life, entered Andy's shack ten minutes later, one bearing a huge tiger cat and the other a mangy looking cur, which had been found engaged in combat down at the end of the alley.

Dinky immediately released the ferocious-looking cat upon Andy's clean kitchen floor. Terry's earlier finds were (up to that moment) feeding contentedly upon large chunks of bread that had been soaked in the diluted condensed milk. Pip wisely held fast to the growling cur and looked inquiringly to his leader.

One might have sensed battle in the air for

the three cats hissed menacingly and seemed not very well pleased with each other's company. But Terry was oblivious of it all, for in Pip's arms rested the very dog that he had always dreamed of owning.

"Say, what a peach, Pip!" he exclaimed. "Man, I bet he's a thoroughbred, huh?"

The dog wiggled one big ear and stopped growling. He sniffed eagerly toward Terry's outstretched hand and barked joyously. "Gee," said Pip. "Look, he likes you already, Terry. Honest, I never saw anything like that before."

Terry chuckled. "Sure, he recognizes that I'm his master right away. Man, I'm going to name him—let me see . . ."

The dog was squirming furiously in Pip's arms and revealed two large bumps just behind either ear. He had evidently received them in some recent fray and upon close inspection, Terry decided that they weren't permanent.

"Anyway, I'll call him Bumps just the same, huh?" he asked Pip.

Pip nodded, astonished. He had often heard

of love at first sight, but this was his first experience of actually witnessing it.

And love at first sight it surely was. Terry took the barking dog from Pip's arms and carried him gently into the bedroom where he tied him to a stool. He had no time to fondle his new pet, however, for Pip called frantically for him to come out as the cats had engaged in a free-for-all fight.

Terry was busy up to the time Andy came in. But he triumphed. One cat was shut up in the living room, the other in the kitchen and the tiger cat was safely subdued and under the cellar stairs. A few particles of motley-colored fur still lay about, but peace reigned supreme.

"Lan' sakes," said Andy, looking around the room, after Terry explained, "it won't work out, I'm afraid—having three hungry cats and a fightin' dog all under the one roof. There's bound to be trouble some of the time, eh, boy?"

Bumps yelped appealingly from the bedroom and Terry looked thoughtfully at the mass of fur that he had just swept up into the dustpan.

"Aw, I guess you're right, Andy," he said. "Being kind to animals is all right, but a guy's got to know how to handle 'em—'specially cats, huh? Man, they're a nuisance, I think. But take that dog, for instance—Bumps. Why we liked each other right away so that shows he was meant for me, don't it? Can I keep him?"

Andy smiled. "Sure, if he likes you and you like him as much as that, Terry," he said, kindly. "Only if I were you, I'd lug them cats up to the S. P. C. A. the first thing tomorrow."

Terry said that he would, g l a d l y. With happy heart and light steps he left the house and hurried along to his first important scout meeting, feeling that Andy's suggestion had cleverly solved the first big problem of the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro.

CHAPTER XVI

DEFEAT

All great men in history have met with defeat at some time or other, yet they have gone bravely on to wider and happier fields without flinching. Thus it was with Terrible Terry Dunn, for success seemed not meant for him just then.

He reached the old mansion, not without a chill of apprehension for it seemed strangely quiet. No shouting of hoarse, merry voices trailed out of the broken windows from within. No cries of welcome to the future president, the future scoutmaster and the future patrol leader of the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro—nothing. All was as silent as the tomb.

A sort of muffled beating in his left breast increased as he climbed the cellar stairs. He indulged a last minute hope that the future

Scouts of Bridgeboro might just be maintaining a prolonged silence in order to surprise him—such things had happened. And with that in mind he slowly opened the door into the kitchen, hoping that someone would jump out and whack him fraternally, but the hope died as quickly as it was born.

Pip and Dinky sat on the soap boxes, awaiting him faithfully, but no other p r e s e n c e stirred in all that vast room. Terry's heart bounded, then leaped back into place. He realized instantly that the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro was already a flat failure and tried to bear his disappointment bravely.

"None of 'em came, Terry," Pip said, tragically.

"They're a lot of tin horn sports, that's what they are!" exclaimed Dinky, loyally. "That's a saying my mother has and it's true about that bunch. I bet they didn't come on account of having to pay a nickel. C h e a p skates—they would have come if it was for nothing I bet, hah?"

Terry scowled. "I should worry," he said, listlessly.

"My ma says everything happens for the best, Terry, so don't you care," said Pip.

"Didn't I say I didn't care!" Terry shouted. "Now that I come to think of it, they would have been a nuisance—they would want to be busting in on us all the time. Man, we wouldn't have had any time to ourselves — that's a fact!"

"We can take hikes and things ourselves," said Dinky, without much spirit. "We can be scouts just the same, huh?"

Terry sat down wearily on the soap box and cupped his chin in his hands. For some time he scrutinized the disorder of the back alley through a broken window pane. Twilight was setting in and clothed the harsh outlines in soft tones and dancing shadows. Everything was the same, yet all seemed changed, he thought, despite what Dinky had said. The spell of the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro was forever broken.

"Well, if we can't be scouts we can do things just the same," he said, at length. "Nobody can break up our gang, that's one thing."

"I'll say," said Pip, consolingly. "Only

what makes me mad is that some of those scouts—especially Rollie Terhune, will have the laugh on us. He'll . . ."

"What do you mean he'll have the laugh on us!" Terry demanded. "Could he or any of 'em think up a scheme like that—like I did, huh? Just because nobody came doesn't say that it wasn't a good idea. Something else happened, that's what!"

"What, I wonder?" mused Pip, sadly.

At that juncture, a shadow crossed the path of Terry's wandering vision and he sat upright. "Someone's standing near that window, outside," he whispered. "I—I just saw it." He rose and walked quietly across the room.

Suddenly a footstep broke the silence and a piece of loose flagging crunched noisily. Terry stepped back cautiously and caught a fleeting glimpse of Hartley Povey hurrying past under the window.

Terry did not lose a moment in running through the hall to the front door, with Pip and Dinky close behind. Out on the porch they ran and down the steps and so along the broken walk in the gathering dusk, until they came

face to face with Hartley just as he stole out of the side alley.

"Gosh—h'lo!" exclaimed Hartley, startled. "Gosh, where did you fellas come from?"

"We saw you—I saw you, I mean," said Terry. "What were you sneaking in the back alley for, huh?"

Hartley squirmed around on one foot for a second and then looked up. "I wanted to see who came to join your organization, that's why I came!"

Terry looked searchingly into Hartley's face. "Why should you care who came, huh?" he asked, severely. "Listen, Hart—I've done lots of things I shouldn't do but I never lied—anybody can tell you that and I can tell when anyone is lying. You're lying, that's what—I can tell!"

Hartley was clearly abashed. His face flushed and he couldn't keep his eyes fixed on his accuser. "Well, what of it?" he said, taking refuge in that retort.

"What d'ye come for?" Terry persisted, fiercely.

"I—I just wanted to see if any of the fellas came after what I—"

"After *what?*"

Hartley had never meant to give himself away, but he was helpless under Terry's fire. "After I told 'em t h a t the Boy Scouts of Bridgeboro wouldn't be a real organization and that they might get arrested for trying to imitate real scouts," he said, defiantly, but none the less sheepishly.

Terry felt more hurt than angry by that time. "Maybe you feel happy now that you broke up my organization, huh!" he exclaimed, trying hard to fight down the choking sensation in his throat.

Hartley was all contrition. "Gosh, I—I didn't mean to break it up on you, Terry. Honest! I—I was just sore, and besides, Mr. Ellsworth said it wouldn't last long. He used some —some big word that meant the same thing and he even laughed. He even made fun of it, so gee . . ."

"Is that true, Hart—did he laugh—cross your heart and hope to die?" asked Terry, in tremulous tones.

"Sure — sure, he did," answered Hartley, not aware of the cruel wound that his information had made in Terry's sensitive mind.

That was all that Terry wanted to know. He turned around and walked up on the porch steps and sat down. Hartley slunk away with relief, and Pip and Dinky noiselessly approached the broken steps, and stood beside their brooding leader.

"Gee, you should worry about it, Terry," said Pip, trying to be sympathetic.

"It's only because he laughed," said Terry, showing a side of his nature that had never before been revealed to his companions. And that was because he had never before been laughed at. To him, it was tragedy.

Mrs. Cornell and Mrs. Duff at that moment called long and loudly for their sons to come home to supper. Andy was used to waiting and served his nephew when he appeared. Terry, in the midst of his grief, had already forgotten his solemn resolve to make a prompt supper appearance as the daily good turn and stared blankly into distance as Pip and Dinky took their unwilling leave of him.

Night gradually obscured him from the street traffic and he sat on, contemplating his wrongs. The wind had died down and a faint, curious quickening in the air hinted spring. Terry, temperamental and sentimental, sensed the change immediately. It made him feel strangely sad instead of glad. A lump rose in his throat and he had to swallow hard to keep from crying and for the first time in his young life he felt lonely.

No great wonder then, that when he heard a soft, pitter patter of padded feet along the flagstone walk, his senses quickened. A soft, flabby object of skin and fur sniffed at his feet, then crawled up the step and under his legs, whining joyfully. Terry knew, but just to make sure he felt back of both the long ears and when his hands slid over two good-sized bumps he smiled and let two great tears escape from his eyes.

He was complimenting Bumps on his remarkable intelligence in seeking out his new master so soon. "You came right to me, didn't you, mutt?" he asked, happily.

Just then another step sounded on the walk

and he quickly picked up the dog and held his mouth shut to keep him from barking. Up it came, stumbled, then walked more lightly than before. Terry held his breath.

The first porch step creaked, the second step creaked and suddenly a figure loomed up just alongside of him. Frightened as he was, Terry did not forget that one of scouting's first demands is for a scout to be brave. He held Bumps close to his beating heart and smiled into the darkness.

"Who goes there?" he said.

"Oh—oh, gosh," said the familiar voice of Roland Terhune, "what you doing here—isn't that you, Terry?"

Terry's face sobered and he let Bumps down to bark at his feet. "Sure, it's me and what of it, huh?" he asked, curtly.

Roland laughed. "Gosh, you needn't get so mad about it," he said, pleasantly.

"Who wouldn't get mad!" exclaimed Terry, feeling his anger return. "You fellas—the scouts and Mr. Ellsworth—they broke up my organization and Hartley Povey told me he laughed—all of you laugh. That's all you can

do. But I should worry—it was a good scheme and anyway you'll be sorry for laughing."

"Say, hey," Roland said, "what are you getting at?"

Terry didn't say more on the subject. He had formed his opinion of the scoutmaster and scouts and that was all there was to it. Consequently, he eyed Roland's shadowy figure suspiciously.

"Never mind what I'm getting at," he said at length, "what are *you* getting at, huh? What are you doing sneaking up here for, anyway? This is our hangout—mine and Pip's and Dink's."

"I know it is," admitted Roland, almost apologetically. "I wasn't going to do anything to the place. I—I just came down here looking . . ."

"My uncle saw you down here the other night too," Terry interposed. "He recognized you."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Roland. "He won't—he won't tell anybody, will he?"

Terry leaned over and scratched Bump's

head. "Andy ain't the kind to tell," he said, evasively, "but anyway what you doing down here two nights like this, huh?"

"I — I — you won't tell if I tell you, will you?" asked Roland in a manner that moved Terry's sentimental side.

"What do you think I am, huh?" Terry answered. "I cross my heart and hope to die."

"Well, all right then," said Roland, with a sigh of relief. "I—came down here Saturday night and tonight 'cause I'm looking for Tuck —Tucker Marshall."

Terry sat up straight. "Huh?" he asked.

"Tucker Marshall," repeated Roland. "I came looking for him."

"He's a thief—he's no good!" Terry said, excitedly. "He robbed your house too, didn't he?"

"Yeah," answered Roland. "That's why I wanted to see if he'd be hiding down here. He's a double crosser, that feller."

"You should have known that the other day when you came here to talk to him," said

Terry, frankly. "I—I saw you—I saw it was you when you left here. Even Pip and Dinky and me ain't allowed to talk to Tuck Marshall. Man, and he robbed your house!"

"Have you seen him?" asked Roland.

CHAPTER XVII

GETTING EVEN

"Nope," answered Terry. "Anyway, the cops 'd see him first. I'd tell on him on account of what I read in the Handbook. You should too—you're even a regular scout."

"I sure would," said Roland, vehemently. "I know I'd like to tell him what I think of him. He took five hundred dollars worth of jewelry that belonged to my mother and—gee, he's a double crosser, all right."

"Well," said Terry, "it's good you didn't get in with him—like a pal or anything. Man, nobody trusts him around here."

"Well, anyhow he's gone and I should worry," said Roland as if dismissing the subject. "I want a canoe, that's all I'm thinking about. It just seems I can't get it—even out of my grandfather!"

He said it so pettishly and yet so vehemently that Terry turned and tried hard to see his face in the dark. "Man, what you want a canoe for, huh?" he asked, wonderingly, for it seemed an amazingly extravagant desire for a boy to have.

"Just 'cause I want it," said Roland, as if he were mentally pouting. "Another thing, I want it if I'm going to be leader of the new patrol. I got to have something that the fellers'll look up to. Gosh, I can't seem to make my grandfather understand it."

Terry stared curiously while Bumps went over and sniffed at Roland's feet. He stayed long enough to growl a trifle then pranced back and up onto his master's lap. "Have you got a good penknife?" asked Terry, after a pause.

"What's a penknife got to do with a canoe, huh?" asked Roland, impatiently.

"Nothing," answered Terry. "Some day I'm going to have a good penknife 'cause I'll be rich."

Roland laughed. "That don't mean anything," he said, pettishly. "Look at all the

money my father and grandfather have, and they won't even give me a canoe!"

"I bet you get other things though, huh?" asked Terry.

"The canoe's what I want," said Roland persistently. "When Mr. Ellsworth gets you fellers rounded up for the patrol, I'll have it or bust!"

"Then you'll bust," Terry announced quietly, feeling his wounds afresh. "Just because my organization busted up doesn't say I'm going to stand for you bossing me. You can have your canoe for other fellas—not me or Dinky or Pip."

Roland was quiet for a few moments. Then he said, "Gosh, you're sore at the scouts, aren't you?"

"Why wouldn't I be, huh?" Terry wanted to know." "Even the scoutmaster laughs at me—well, let him laugh—that won't make me join. I'd like to get even with him, I would!"

Roland pursed his lips. "Well, gosh, I don't blame you, honest I don't," he said, patronizingly. "Mr. Ellsworth shouldn't have laughed." Then: "Honest and truly, would

you like to get even with—er—the scouts—with him?"

"Sure, I would," answered Terry, earnestly. "I'd like to do s o m e t h i n g—I don't know what!"

"Well—well, I know something, Terry," said Roland softly. "I—I like the scouts, of course—you know what I mean. They're nice fellers and I've had a lot of fun with them so it wouldn't be them or Mr. Ellsworth I'd get hunk on exactly—it'd be my father and grandfather."

"What you getting at?" asked Terry, curiously.

"Well, Friday night we're going to have a donation," Roland began, cunningly. "My grandfather's donating some money—two hundred and fifty dollars for some gymnasium things for our use. And Mr. Ellsworth told me today that he'd make me treasurer of it until Saturday when we're going to go and buy the things. He's letting me have charge of it on account of Grandpop giving it."

"What of it?" asked Terry, tersely, while

Roland paused in the recital of his great scheme.

"Well, I'm supposed to take it home with me Friday night and there wouldn't be anybody suspecting that you were around to, sort of—well, take it from me, would there?"

"Say, what you mean, huh? Do you think I'd steal to get hunk, huh? What you think I am?"

"Calm down, Terry," said Roland, ingratiatingly. "I'm not saying I want you to steal—gosh! All I want you to do is take it and bring it down here to hide it 'cause I'm going to take some of that money for the canoe."

Terry gasped.

"Aw, don't get excited—I'm going to tell Grandpop that someone held me up and took the money. He'll have to give the donation over again—see! Then I can come down here and maybe after awhile, why, I can say I found it or something. Anyway, that won't be a crime when I intend to give it back. It's just so's I get that canoe!"

Terry was silent. He couldn't make out what he thought about it. Suddenly an idea occurred to him. "How will I get hunk on the scouts by doing that, huh?" he asked puzzled.

"Well, won't they all be excited about it Saturday!" Roland returned. "They'll think they're out of luck because Grandpop probably won't give the donation over again until the next Friday night meeting."

"And you think Mr. Ellsworth would be mad, huh?" Terry asked, as if that were all that was necessary.

"Sure, he'd be hopping mad," answered Roland, willingly. "He'll even be kind of sore at me, I bet. He'll think I was careless or something but I'll have it all fixed for you to meet me under the big tree as you cross the street to the Hall. I'll come out kind of after the others—say at ten-thirty, huh? All you have to do is take the money from me—it'll be in an envelope. Gosh, that'll be just like big robberies you hear about, huh?"

Terry shifted uneasily. "I won't do it if you say it'll be like that," he said frankly. "I —I wouldn't steal for nothing."

"Aw, heck, don't be so touchy," said Roland. "Who said anything about making you steal! Your job is to take the envelope and bring it down here and hide it—where'll we hide it?"

Terry forced himself to think it was all right. "There's some loose boards in the kitchen," he said, hesitantly. "They're under the sink—I'll put it there."

"Gosh, that's fine," said Roland, exultantly. "You just do that, Terry, and I'll do the rest. You can leave it there until I'm ready to come and get it?"

"Will—will you take out the money for the canoe first, huh?" asked Terry, in soft tones.

"Sure," Roland answered, loftily. "What do you think I'm going to all that trouble for! I'm going up to Riverdale and see a feller there that has a beaut of a canoe for sale. I'm going the first thing Saturday morning."

"Won't your father and grandfather think it's funny for you to get a canoe when you're s'posed not to have any money?"

"Leave that to me," answered Roland, confidently. "I'm no fool. I'll hide it and use it

whenever I want to but they won't know anything about it 'till they cough the money up for me to buy it."

It was all a maze to Terry. He could not figure out Roland's plan for doing such a thing and yet being honest, but in his simple way he accepted the other's word that it would all be quite right. He could not conceive of a boy so rich being a thief and with this thought he tried to forget a certain whispering voice that clamored for recognition within.

Terry's face burned for some reason. "Do you think Mr. Ellsworth and the rest will be so disappointed that—that I can laugh at them. Would they be mad enough for me to have to laugh, huh?"

"I'll say," Roland enthused and feeling that he had safely launched Terry on his plan. "You can laugh all you want for all I care. I'll be getting my canoe while you're laughing."

Terry stirred. "Your grandfather will be mad too, won't he?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh boy, sure," answered Roland. "But then he's always getting mad at me. My fa-

ther does too, but not so much as Grandpop. He says I might just as well have been drowned too."

"What you mean?"

"My brother. He was only a little kid about three months old and when the nurse left him in the garden for about ten minutes, the carriage rolled down the bank and dumped the kid in the river, I guess. Anyway, they never found him. Grandpop says my mother'll never get over it."

"Man, that's awful."

"Oh, well," said Roland lightly, "my mother's as easy as pie with me. The only thing, I can't get her to make Dad or Grandpop give me the canoe. She won't speak for me this time. She says I've asked for too much and that I'm spoiled. I should worry if I am. I'll get the canoe, anyhow."

They parted after that and with Bumps still held tightly in his arms Terry walked leisurely along the back alley and home. He felt strangely sad again, for Pip and Dinky would not be in on the plan for Friday night. It seemed almost an ill omen that they would be

excluded from such a daring scheme. He wondered if he were being disloyal in not telling them.

Bumps snuggled close to his threadbare coat and sighed profoundly. So did Terry. Was it worth while, he asked himself. Was it even right?

He wondered.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BETTER ONE

Andy got up from his chair and hurried over to the stove as soon as Terry entered. "I been keepin' your victuals hot, boy," he said, stirring hastily as he spoke. "You're extra late tonight, eh? And I was thinkin' sure that that scout turn or whatever you call it was goin' to bring you home on the dot. Never mind, though, I saved my tea to drink with you."

"I would have kept my promise and come home, Andy," Terry said, quietly, "only something happened. I mean I met a fella and we talked a lot so that's the reason. I won't stay out again though, Andy. I'm different than I used to be, I guess. I mean I want to please you more."

"Well, you do please me, Terry," the old

man said, happily. "And I don't mind so awful much when you're a little late if it makes you happy."

"I—I wasn't so happy tonight, Andy," Terry admitted, wistfully. "My organization busted up—it didn't amount to nothing and Mr. Ellsworth laughed about it. Hartley Povey said so. *I* wouldn't laugh when a fella was trying."

"Now, now," said Andy, soothingly. "You're just hungry, boy, an' it makes you a little wishy-washy. Just eat," he said, setting the hot food down on the table, "and you'll feel as bright as a dollar. I'm sorry though that your organization ain't amounted to nothing. But it ain't Mr. Ellsworth's fault. He most likely laughed to think you was so smart as to think up a scheme like that. That's what I think."

Terry attacked his food with a will. "Anyway, he laughed," he said, disgruntled, "and I'm going to get hunk."

"That ain't talkin' like you," said Andy, coming over to the table and sitting opposite Terry. The vapor from his tea-cup rose high

into the air and he watched it, thoughtfully. "You ain't never been one to hold grudges."

"Well, I'm just going to get the chance to laugh back at him and then I'll like him again," said Terry, naively and smiling. "That's a good way to get hunk, huh?"

"Good as any," Andy smiled. "Anyway, I like to see you have a good disposition, Terry. Don't ever git grouchy and sour on the world. It don't get you anywheres. A fella just has to take what's comin' to him."

Terry thought of Roland's disposition. It wasn't such a nice one now that he was reminded of it. He was irritable and peevish and he would have the canoe at any cost. He wanted more than what was coming to him. Just thinking about it made Terry's face burn again and his heart leaped sickeningly.

He talked at random to escape thinking. Finally he blurted out, "I met a fella down at Hunter's before, Andy," and he leaned over to give Bumps a piece of bread.

"Yeah," said Andy, sipping his tea. "Who?"

"That Rollie Terhune."

Andy put down his cup and he stared over Terry's red head. "What's he doin' down this way so much, eh?" he asked.

"Aw, he came to have it out with Tuck Marshall," answered Terry indifferently. "He didn't know Tuck was such a bad one and I guess Tuck must have got it out of him where his mother kept her jewelry. He stole five hundred dollars worth and Rollie's sore as anything."

"Lan' sakes!" exclaimed Andy. "Now ain't that awful, Terry! Me, oh my, what's the world comin' to when a fella Tuck's age will do such a thing and him with a hard workin' father and mother!"

"Rollie thought maybe he was hidin' in Hunter's, can you beat that!" Terry chattered on. Bumps yelped for and received a half of a potato. "He'll have a swell chance of finding a slick one like Tuck anywhere near Hunter's."

Andy took a generous sip of the steaming tea and shook his head. "More 'n likely he's out west or some place," he said. "No matter what way you look at it, it's bad business.

That Ter—Terhune boy's grandpop would be hoppin' if he knew his grandson was a friend o' Tucker Marshall's. . . ."

"He only talked to him once or so," Terry interposed quickly. "That's what Rollie told me."

"Well, even that was bad enough, Terry. Tucker ain't one for boys your age to even look at. He's a bad influence and that rich young man is lucky he didn't get into trouble about it—I suppose his folks don't know he was acquainted with Marshall, eh?"

"No," said Terry, uncomfortably, "he made me promise I wouldn't tell."

"I should say so," Andy heartily agreed. "'T's bad 'nuff as 'tis. What else did you talk about, Terry?"

Terry squirmed in his chair. "Lots of things," he answered. Then: "He ain't got such a swell temper though, Andy. He's even worse than me sometimes, I guess. An' he had a brother that got drownded, an' Rollie says his granpop says he might as well 'a' got drownded too."

"Eh?" Andy inquired, with his cup in his

trembling old fingers. "What's that about his brother, Terry?"

Terry shrugged his shoulders and kept on feeding Bumps odd bits of potato. "Aw, nothing much," he said. "His brother was just a kid three months old, Rollie told me, and the nurse left him in the carriage while she went in the house or something. Anyway, the thing rolled down the bank (you know how their house stands and the way their yard runs down to the river) and the kid must have drownded. Did you ever hear about it, huh?" he asked, seeing Andy's intent expression.

"Er-r, yes," answered Andy. "Course I did—everybody did here in town. It was a great big dog they had that they think knocked the carriage over—did he tell you that?"

"No, I guess he forgot it. He only told me about it to show off how much he could make his mother ask for things from his father and grandfather. He said his mother wouldn't get over his dead brother, so I s'pose that's why she gets so many things for Rollie, huh?"

Andy got up from the table and went back to the stove for a second cup of tea. "Is that

what he told you, Terry—that his mother wouldn't get over it?"

"Yeah, but maybe she don't know how lucky she is. He mightn't have been any nicer than Rollie, huh? Man, he wants everything on the calendar."

Andy came back to the table slowly and set down his cup. "Do you think you'll be friends with him now, Terry?" he asked, falteringly. "Do you think you'll like him?"

"Like him? Man, I don't know. He ain't like Pip or Dinky or me, I know that. He don't talk about his folks the way we do ours—you know what I mean, Andy. He don't seem to think it's anything that his mother and the rest give him so much. I guess he don't love 'em the way I do you, huh?" Terry added, in the frank, boyish way that Andy so loved.

"I 'spect not," answered Andy, his weak old eyes filling with tears. "But then that's because he ain't you. There's only one Terry."

CHAPTER XIX

SUSPENSE

The week passed swiftly by—too swiftly for Terry's peace of mind. When Friday morning came he felt almost sick at heart. The plan now seemed tremendous, too daring to be right and yet he hadn't the courage to go and tell Roland so for fear of being laughed at.

The afternoon came and he failed miserably in every period at school. He was utterly unable to concentrate on anything except the evening's project and at three o'clock he purposely hurried away from Pip's and Dinky's penetrating eyes just so that he could be alone and think it out.

The supper hour brought him no happiness for Andy was going to work late that evening, probably until eleven o'clock. That would be after. . . . He couldn't bring himself to think

of it and wished heartily that he had told his uncle the whole thing.

"He would have told me if it was anything like stealing," he told himself aloud, as he sat down to watch Bumps feast on ten cents worth of liver. "Anyway, after I meet him, I'll hurry down and put it under those boards quick so I won't have anything more to do with it. It ain't stealing if I hurry and get it out of my hands in ten minutes or maybe less if I run fast, huh, Bumps?"

Bumps turned around and licked his master's hand affectionately. It acted upon Terry's sorely distressed soul as a temporary tonic and he took heart immediately. An hour later he and the dog set forth.

Spring had surely come. The air was almost warm and as Terry passed up Main Street in the direction of the Hall, the sweet smell of sap seemed to fill the street. There was a friendliness about it that the boy clung to in thought, for he could not entirely dispel the feeling that ever since his meeting with Roland that night, he had been strangely alone and friendless.

He paced up and down the street and watched the lights in the Hall, nervously. He heard the library clock chime out ten times during a momentary lull in the traffic and crossed the street in order to let Bumps down to run at will. That he couldn't do for long as there were other canines that espied the little spaniel and insisted on becoming either friendly or antagonistic as the case might be.

He took the dog up in his arms again and walked around the block to River Street. There he stopped and idly watched the lights blinking sleepily on the Henderson Street bridge. The river flowed smoothly under, like a lithe, black snake, and every now and then he could hear a plob from the water as some lively fish hurtled to and fro with the tide.

"An eel, I bet," he said, half aloud. "I'd like to go fishing for 'em instead of doing what I'm going to do. I don't like it—*I don't!* I wish I'd have told him. Aw, but man, it's his funeral, anyway, not mine."

He walked down past the water works and so on to the edge of the river. The chiming of the library clock reminded him that it was

a quarter after the hour. He let Bumps down and the dog sniffed eagerly at the muddy smelling banks.

"Don't go ducking yourself in or get full o' mud, you mutt," he said, fondly. "Remember I got to carry you back along with that blamed —man, I wouldn't do that to my grandfather if I was him. I'll go through with it now 'cause I ain't a quitter, but all the laugh is out of me. I couldn't laugh at Mr. Ellsworth or the scouts now if they stood making cross-eyed faces at me for a whole year. That's how much I don't like it."

Bumps disappeared under the bank for a moment and Terry whistled, frantically. There was a little pause, then he heard a scuffling noise and the dog appeared carrying a large, dead muskrat.

Terry was delighted. "Even you're a hunting dog, ain't you, Bumps!" he exclaimed, throwing the rat back into the river.

The dog barked and Terry took him up in his arms again. The library clock was chiming the half hour. He turned and took a sort of last, lingering look at the peaceful river.

All along the farther shore, he noted, were summer bungalows—as far as the eye could reach.

"Some place way up there where I can't see," he told himself, "I'm going to have a summer bungalow where Andy can fish and never do any work, 'cause that's what he really likes. I'll be rich and that's what I'll do for him when I grow up, huh, Bumps?"

The dog barked answeringly and Terry cautioned him in soft, measured tones to refrain from any more outbursts until after they got safely home. "It'll give me dead away if you start yop-yopping, Bumps, 'cause you never can tell who's around. *Man!*"

He found himself under the tree and noted with relief that most of the lights in the Hall were out. Only a few remained. In the distance he could hear loud, laughing voices and hoped that they represented all of the scouts who had been present in the Hall that evening.

Suddenly he heard a door quickly open and shut and he drew himself up closer in the shadow of the tree. The soft pattering of

footsteps approached and he shifted the dog under his left arm and clamped his skinny hand securely around its jaws.

"I'm not going to do it!" he thought, decisively as the footsteps came nearer. "I'll tell him. . . ."

Roland's straight, thin figure was outlined as he crossed the street under the arc light. Then he became part of the shadow again and before Terry realized it he was standing alongside of the tree.

"Here," he whispered, quickly, and shoving a long white envelope into Terry's clenched fist, "take it quick and beat it 'cause Mr. Ellsworth is coming right out. Run back down by the river and I'll yell soon's you're out of sight that I've been held up. He thinks I just came out to wait here for him while he locks . . ."

A door opened and shut and before Terry could protest, Roland cried "Help! Help!"

Terry ran frantically from behind the tree and down into River Street, squeezing the hated envelope into his pocket as he ran. Bumps was struggling against this new order

of things, quite rebelliously, but his excited master gave him no time or freedom to bark his indignation.

Terry could only visualize Mr. Ellsworth running hurriedly down the Hall steps and toward the shouting Roland. The very thought of it increased his speed and when he finally found himself in lower Main Street, he stopped for breath and released Bumps.

The rest of the way, he kept feeling the pocket guiltily, and Roland's cries for help fairly haunted him. The deception of it sickened him and he wished that he had waited for Mr. Ellsworth and told the whole thing. But it was too late, he told himself. No one would believe him and besides he had the incriminating evidence in his pocket.

A familiar figure of a man with whom he had always chatted on happier days came strolling up the street. Mr. Ryle, the policeman on the Henry Street beat. He was almost a hated figure to Terry then—a figure that he now feared.

The frantic boy grabbed the dog and slunk like some hunted criminal into an open door-

way until the officer had passed. After that he sneaked almost on tiptoe down along the deserted street and into the empty house.

Every board that squeaked under his foot caused his heart to miss a beat. So many years that he had gone into that lonely place without once hearing its aged floors and ceilings crackling from disuse! Yet tonight he realized that the place seemed haunted.

All Henry Street declared that the place was haunted and Terry had always laughed along with Dinky and Pip. But he didn't laugh tonight—he was sure of it as he groped his way up the cellar stairs and opened the door into the kitchen, with icy, trembling hands. It was only Bumps that kept him from losing his morale altogether.

As he walked across the kitchen floor, a door somewhere upstairs slammed eerily. Terry just managed to stifle the scream that was on his lips and that was all. The sudden draught from the open cellar door caused the big front door to groan weirdly and the boy huddled, shivering, against the old iron sink.

Bumps rubbed his cold nose through a large

hole in Terry's stocking and the contact gave him courage. He picked up the dog fiercely and taking the crackling envelope out of his pocket, knelt down and felt along the broken boards until his hand reached the opening.

A cat cried monotonously somewhere in the alley as Terry hurried out of the depressing place. Not a soul did he meet all along the way and when he reached home the sight of the low, flickering light in the kitchen brought him the only sense of peace that he had experienced since starting out on his hateful mission that night.

He entered as noiselessly as he knew how and was relieved when he saw Andy's withered old features, placid and content in sleep. At least he would be spared telling lies about where he had been and when he crept in beside his uncle he held his breath for fear the quiet, even breathing would stop and the questions begin.

But Fortune favored Terry that night. Bumps snored wearily on the stool at his master's side and the quiet street was almost deathlike in its silence. The library clock

chimed the half hour—he could hear it clearly. Was it only an hour ago that he had raced away from Roland Terhune's deceitful shouts?

It seemed days ago to Terry, and he told himself then that unless that wrong were righted he would have no peace from the whisperings of his conscience.

CHAPTER XX

LAUGHING LAST

Terry feigned sleep that next morning while his uncle prepared himself for his day's work. He could not bear to talk to anyone and he kept his eyes closed as the old man walked wearily about the room.

There was a sort of drag to Andy's step that morning and Terry noticed it from under one eyelid that was half open. He also noticed that his uncle shook his small, bald head at intervals as if he were perplexed and troubled to a great degree.

Terry lay quietly until he heard the back door slam and then he bounded out of bed with Bumps barking joyously at his heels. "Man, Andy's old," the boy said, wistfully, as he watched his uncle trudging down along the sunny street. "I ain't never going to do or

think anything any more, but what I ask him first!"

He felt better after that resolve and hurried around the little shack after breakfast doing what he could to make it tidy and presentable. It was almost mid-morning before he joined his companions and as there was no place to go he allowed them to lead him down to Hunter's place.

His fears left him, however, after they were grouped together and talking things over. Nothing squeaked or crackled in all that great house and even the boards under the sink held no terrors for him now. He breathed freely and only when Bumps insisted on sniffing around that forbidden spot did his heart leap, fearfully.

Finally the twelve-thirty siren blew from the paper mill and Dinky and Pip obediently rose and started for home. Terry announced that he was going to stay for a little while and see if Bumps could catch any mice or rats in the house, but as soon as his friends were out of sight, he rushed over to the sink and felt under the boards.

The dog barked as he drew out the envelope. Terry opened it and with firm resolve took out the bills and counted them. There was just one hundred dollars altogether.

"That's a hundred and fifty he took, the crook!" the boy said, vehemently. He shook his head, thoughtfully. "You can't make me believe that's doing right—*man!*"

He sat on his haunches thinking and thinking about it until he heard the squeak of the front door announcing the arrival of someone. There was barely time for him to put the envelope back into its hiding place before Pip came running into the kitchen, breathlessly.

"Terry!" he cried, excitedly. "I don't know what's happened, but I was just passing behind your house when I heard loud voices and I stopped and listened and what was it but Andy letting that Mr. Ellsworth and a big cop into your house."

Terry's face grew livid.

"I sneaked under the window," Pip continued breathlessly, "and I heard Mr. Ellsworth say to Andy that you held up Rollie Terhune last night and robbed him of two

hundred and fifty dollars what his grandfather's just donated to the scouts. He said Rollie confessed that to him only this morning after they'd been questioning him (he and Rollie's father and the old man) ever since last night. Mr. Ellsworth said he was suspicious of something. . . ."

"MAN!"

"That's a fact, Terry," said Pip, stopping for breath. "He said that Rollie confessed that he didn't want to tell on you or he would have told them last night."

"What else did you hear?" asked Terry in almost a whisper.

"Well, poor Andy got all excited, of course," answered Pip. "He said he knew you was innocent. Gee, the poor old guy was crying when I came away."

Terry's eyes grew misty. "Listen, Pip," he said as bravely as he could, "what are they going to do to me, huh?"

Pip was fighting the tears back also. "Mr. Ellsworth said he hoped you *were* innocent but if they found that you really stole that envelope with the money in, why they'd have

to send you away where the habit wouldn't grow on you or something like that," Pip said in a choking voice.

Terry was trembling all over and the dog stood by, with ears down and tail limp. "And Andy said he knew I was innocent, huh?" asked Terry, hopelessly.

"Sure, he did. And so do I—what do you think! Only, Terry, you got to beat it—you sure have. They're coming down here soon's they can make Andy tell where you are. *And he will tell,* Terry. He's like you—he can't lie. They won't believe you no matter what you say because that pup, Rollie, he's framed that story up against you just 'cause you wouldn't come in his patrol, I bet! It's terrible, but from what Mr. Ellsworth and the cop said I think they won't believe it if you say you're innocent."

Pip excitedly left the room and ran out onto the porch. He was back again presently, more excited than ever. "Now you got to go, Terry," he almost pleaded. "They're standing outside your house now with Andy and I

bet they'll have him lead them up here any minute."

"Where'll I go?" asked Terry, frantically.

"Any place—anywhere!" Pip cried. "Just hide until we can think of something to prove that Rollie's a liar." Then: "Here, Terry, I got a quarter that I saved up, running errands for Mrs. Marshall. Take it in case you get hungry and write to me so I'll know where you are and I can let you know how things are!"

Terry had Bumps in his arms and was running helter-skelter through the cellar and into the back alley. Pip ran along beside him, warning and consoling him alternately. They reached the meadows together and were out of sight of Henry Street in five minutes. It was then that the two boys prepared to take leave of each other.

"Ain't it funny, Pip—I mean awful, I don't know where I'm going!" Terry exclaimed. "I've never been away from Andy like I'm going to do. Tell him—tell him that I took the envelope for fun because Rollie promised me it wasn't stealing. Tell him I did it because

Rollie said Mr. Ellsworth and the scouts would be so mad that I could laugh at them and tell him that Rollie wanted the money himself so's he can buy a canoe. He took a hundred and fifty dollars of it already—last night before I got the envelope and all I did was to run down to Hunter's and hide it beneath the boards under the sink. You know where."

Pip nodded and the tears in his eyes prevented him from getting a last clear look at his beloved leader. Terry was running along the meadow path and stopped every once in a while to wave back while Bumps barked as if he were on a glorious lark.

"Don't forget to tell Andy!" Terry called back. "Write and tell me as soon as Mr. Ellsworth and the cop believes I ain't lying!" He turned and ran on wondering the while where Pip would write to for he felt that he was running into a fathomless space where no one could reach him, ever.

After a time he stopped and rested and when he went on again he just jogged along, faint with hunger and weary from his long chase. He was on the other side of the river

and as he passed along River Road just above the Henderson Street Bridge he thought sadly of all that had happened the night before. The blinking lights were out now and the sun was shining gaily.

After he had gone about four miles he came to a refreshment stand and bought a hot dog and two bottles of lemon soda for his thirst needed quenching badly. The road was an unfrequented one and the farmer who owned the stand seemed glad of this chance customer and also glad to talk.

"You one o' them hiking Boy Scouts?" he asked, pleasantly.

Terry put down his bottle of soda and reddened, noticeably. "Nope," he said, "but I wish I was. I—I'm just hiking for—well, to sort of get away."

The farmer nodded. "Wa'al, you picked a good, shady road," he said. "Most folks don't ride along back this way but it's nice for hikers 'cause you seldom run across a car. There's nothin' but thick woods and summer bungalows up beyond here a spell."

Terry smiled and strode away with the ex-

tra bottle of soda under his arm and munching on the hot dog. Bumps, who had quite an amazing appetite for such a small dog, barked appealingly around the boy's heels until he was compelled to stoop down and share with him a generous portion of the tasty food.

Mid-afternoon found Terry sitting back on the warm grass off the road, sipping the last few drops from his soda bottle. He was utterly weary and dazed for he had never walked so far in his life. Indeed, he thought that he must be miles away from Bridgeboro and it frightened him considerably for he had seen little else but Henry Street during these early years of his life.

He was walking steadily on, however, when the sun began to drop in the west and just ahead of him he saw the thick woods that the farmer had told him of. That would afford him some protection, but he wondered desperately how he was going to eat and how to let Pip know of his hiding place.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the last vestige of red disappeared under a billowy cloud and Terry struck bravely into the thicket. After

a half hour's difficult tramp he came out upon the river bank and saw a bungalow a little farther on.

Dusk was gathering as he came to it and his heart sank within him when he saw that it was tightly boarded up. At every chink and crevice he peered but without success. Even Bump's natural snoopiness revealed no way that he could enter the place and spend the night. There was nothing to do but go on and see what the next place would have to offer.

But the next place did not appear—not that night. The path would lead him into the thick woods, then out upon the river bank and into the woods again. He stumbled and fell many times and finally became so weary that he could go not one step farther.

He was very hungry and he slumped to the ground with a hopeless gesture. Bumps, however, was bearing up bravely—perhaps for his master's sake. At any rate, he jumped gaily into his lap and licked his face, fondly.

"Man!" exclaimed Terry, as soon as

this demonstration had somewhat subsided. "What'd I do without you, huh, Bumps?"

Darkness closed them in completely and soon the hum of river insect life began its early spring chorus. Terry was sitting with his back against a tree, being afraid to lie down because of the damp ground. But his head seemed to grow heavier and heavier. Finally his body began slipping downward and the ground seemed not so damp and cold as before.

He snuggled Bumps close to his side and then made a place for him in the torn lining of his coat. After that he stretched himself out gradually until he felt comfortable and found that the damp moss and rotten leaves upon which he was making his bed were not so bad if he didn't think about it.

Bumps had been quiet a long time and as the chorus from the river grew in volume, Terry felt a poignant ache in his breast that would not be quieted. The klaxon of a car from somewhere in the distance only added to the ache and he longed for Andy's presence as he had never longed for anything before.

He dared not think of his uncle's little shack on Henry Street and yet the vision of the old man sitting there alone would persistently loom up in his mind's eye. The kitchen, their meals together and affectionate talk—it all seemed very unreal. Andy would know he was innocent. . . .

That thought fought its way in and conquered and released a great sob that had been gathering in Terry's throat since dusk. Tears flowed down his cheeks and he made no attempt to stem the tide. Wave after wave of emotion surged through him until he lay exhausted.

An hour afterward an owl hooted persistently, not fifty feet distant. Bumps heard it but vaguely in his dreams and Terry slept blissfully on until the morning sun shot its golden shafts down upon the budding trees.

CHAPTER XXI

TUCKER MARSHALL

That Sunday was a day always to be remembered by Terry. He walked interminably, up and down and in and out the river paths. But he seemed to get nowhere. He couldn't even find his way out to the roadway again.

Hunger and thirst were beginning to wage a relentless war upon his s e n s e s and he tramped hurriedly on, looking to the left and right for some sign of an edible berry along the way. He wished heartily for the Handbook. "Because it tells a fella how not to starve when you get lost like this," he said aloud for the benefit of Bumps' standing ears. "Man, what can you find to eat this time of year, anyway! There's nothing but a lot of rotten grass."

Bumps was trying to make the best of that

fare, notwithstanding. He had no other choice. "I wish I was a dog now," said Terry, wistfully, as he bent over and took a sparing sip of the flat-tasting river water. "Man, this ain't no joke after a fella's been used to three meals a day. I'd be having a square meal with Andy now if it wasn't for that pup, Rollie."

His grief had gone and in its place was a determination to make the best of what came until he could go back and show up Roland. He devised ways and means of torturing that spoiled child of the rich that would have made one's hair stand on end to contemplate. In the end he would always decide that to "just knock him cold," would be the best way.

He talked this over with Bumps many times during the day and when evening again threatened them, Terry was desperate. "Now this is going too far, huh, Bumps!" he would say. "One night is bad enough but two nights on wet ground ain't going to be any too good for Rollie's health when I get back to Bridgeboro. I'll start back in the morning if we can't find a place soon—so help me, Sam!"

Bumps agreed with a prolonged yelp and after the echo of it had died down, Terry was terror-stricken to hear a long, faint cry issuing from between the trees. He grabbed the dog up into his arms and started in search of it.

"Anyway, no matter what it is," he said, "anything's better than the way we are now!"

He walked carefully in and around the path and just after it turned again he espied a summer bungalow—unboarded. The door was standing wide open and twilight threw fanciful shadows upon it as if a dozen or more persons were standing there.

Terry approached cautiously, but a weak voice called: "It's all right, whoever you are. I got a broken ankle and I couldn't touch you no matter what!"

Terry hurried in and saw a figure lying on a couch. The light was dim and he pulled open the door wider. "Ain't you got a light or nothing?" he asked.

"Nope, I ain't had nothing but scraps to eat, either," answered the young man in tones

so faint that it was some time before Terry recognized them.

"Say . . ." he began.

"Aw, I know. You're going to ask me if it's me, ain't you, Terry!"

Terry gasped. *"Man—Tuck!"*

CHAPTER XXII

TERRY'S NEW ROLE

"Don't ask me how I got here," said Marshall, before Terry had completely recovered from the shock. "Ask me how I crawled here."

Terry pulled the cot around and over under the window so that he could see what was to be done. Pity and compassion was all that he felt when he beheld Tucker's emaciated condition.

"Man, what have you lived on, huh?" asked Terry.

"It was just luck that I got a bunch of hot dogs and some soda and crackers from a hick that keeps a refreshment stand somewhere down below. A fella gave me a lift after I got away that night. His car broke down after a couple of miles and I hobbled, then crawled

the rest of the way here. It was just luck this wasn't boarded up—it's the only one 'cause I looked around thorough, believe me!"

"What about your foot, huh?"

Marshall shook his head and grinned. "Only a doc can fix that, kid. I guess it's a fracture or something. I tried holding it but it wasn't any go. I got it when old man Terhune chased me. Did you hear about it?"

Terry nodded. "Man, you got to eat, huh?"

"I'll say I do! And you don't look as if a good meal would kill you."

Terry smiled. "Where'll I go, huh?"

"No place tonight," answered Marshall. "Now that you're here I can't afford to lose you. It'd be ten to one that you get lost in the woods if you try and find the road in the dark. We'll have to sleep on empty stomachs for another night."

"How do you know my stomach's empty, huh?"

"By your face and 'cause you're here in this dump. What's happened?"

Terry told him, meanwhile sitting on the edge of the couch. Bumps stretched himself

contentedly on the dry floor and went to sleep and before the narrative was finished night had surrounded them once more.

"I wouldn't care," said Terry, bitterly, "only that he promised me it wasn't stealing. And because of him, here's two nights that I've had to leave Andy alone."

Marshall sighed. "I'm sorry for you, kid, because that Rollie's going to turn out a bad one. I'm none too good myself, but one thing, I never let out on my own folks like he did to me."

"Huh—what you mean, Tuck?"

"I mean that Rollie told me where his mother's jewelry was and he asked me to go up there. Aw, I'm not making myself out a goody-good. I was willing enough to go, but since I've been alone here, I've had a long study period, believe me. I know that there ain't a canoe in the country that would make me to let out on my mother's stuff."

Terry leaned forward. "You mean he asked you to do that so he could get that canoe, huh?"

"Sure. He fixed the whole thing for me

'cause his people were to be away in the city that night. He had it fixed that I should meet him down in Hunter's place after I did the job and divide up with him. All he wanted, he said, was enough for his canoe. Anyway, the old man turned up unexpectedly and chased me so I had to get away the best I could. I'd have been a sap to hobble down to Hunter's just to please him."

"He called you a double crosser."

"Well, he's worse than me, kid, and that ain't saying much."

Stars came out one by one and soon the shimmering light of a full moon swept the eastern sky and blessed them with an abundance of moonlight. Terry watched Marshall's weary, emaciated face, thoughtfully. He dozed at intervals, then seemed to be brighter for a little time afterward.

It was after one of these dozing intervals that Terry spoke of what was on his mind. "Ain't you ever sorry for doing what you have, Tuck?"

Marshall opened his eyes and smiled, kindly. "Well, I ain't exactly the happiest guy in the

world after a thing like this, Terry, kid. I don't feel as if I was sleeping on a bed of roses when I think of how I gave in to letting that kid double cross his own mother. Aw, I know he's got the black streak in him—he showed it for fair when he played that trick on you. But I blame myself for ever going near that house. Honest, I don't like it whenever I think of it."

"Man, you ought to read that Scout Handbook," Terry said, enthusiastically. "You'd get so, I betcha, that you'd never touch a thing again. Honest, it's nice to be good, Tuck. You ought to try it."

"They won't let me now—it's too late," the young man sighed. "Anyway, I meant to put Mrs. Terhune's stuff right back in her dresser —I did—honest! Whenever I think of her picture. . . .

"Did you see her picture?"

"Sure, that night. It's in her bedroom and she's a swell looker, Terry. She's like my ma used to look, I guess. Anyway, I can't keep those things when I think of her picture."

"Man, that was lucky—her picture, I mean. It made you honest, sort of—huh?"

"Well, it made something of me since you came in and told me what that little black-hearted Rollie tried to do to you."

"Well, I'm glad if I helped too, Tuck. I was a fool for running away, I can see that now. When I wasn't a thief I should have stayed and proved what Rollie is, don't you say so?"

"Sure. You're a good kid."

Terry's heart swelled with joy. "I'm going to do something for you, Tuck," he announced, with pride. "I'm going to take those jewels back to Mrs. Terhune for you tomorrow. I'm going to tell her to give you a chance to prove that you can be honest. Will you prove it, huh?"

Marshall smiled, weakly. "Whatever you say, kid. And I never go back on my word—that's one good thing about me. The only thing, I guess. But on the other hand, what'll you do for me tomorrow?"

"Leave it to me, Tuck," Terry answered, smilingly. "I'll go out and find that road and

I'll get somebody to drive you into Bridgeboro and home or a hospital. Whatever you say."

"I say home," said Tuck, and closed his eyes.

Terry found himself a small rug after a few minutes' search around the moonlit room and wrapping himself up in it went happily to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

ANDY TELLS

Terry was fortunate early the next morning. He found his way out to the road and also encountered a genial motorist who was glad to be of service.

After a tedious crawl they got Marshall in the car and started back for Bridgeboro. Bumps barked happily and Terry felt glad that he was going back to face things like a man. All the way in he planned and replanned what he was going to say to Mr. Ellsworth and the big policeman.

"'Cause I'm coming in without anyone telling me to shows that I'm innocent, huh?" he asked Tuck in a whisper.

"Betcha," answered Marshall. "When are you going to stop at Terhune's?"

"After I see Andy. I bet he's been lonely."

And Andy was lonely in spite of the kind

ministrations of Henry Street neighbors and Mr. Ellsworth who had been taking turns in sitting at his bedside ever since Saturday night. The doctor said he was too weak and old to stand a shock and that his nephew's absence only hastened the inevitable.

Thus one can easily understand the shock that Terry received when he stood happy and smiling with Bumps in his arms, before his uncle's door. Tuck had been safely left to his mother's care and there seemed no other joy in the world but to wait for Andy's home-coming that evening.

The smile faded from Terry's face as Mr. Ellsworth opened the door. "Oh, it's you, my boy," the scoutmaster said. "I'm no end glad."

"What?" Terry cried anxiously as Mrs. Cornell's sad face appeared around the jamb of the bedroom door. "What's matter, huh?" Instinctively, he let Bumps down and the dog went slinking in with his tail between his legs.

"Your uncle, Terry," said Mr. Ellsworth kindly, as the boy stepped into the front room. "He's been very sick—it's so unfortunate. It

was too much of a shock for him. He's waiting to see you—go right in."

Terry had never been in the presence of one seriously sick and he approached Andy's bedside, terribly awed and frightened. But his uncle did not look any different—perhaps a little thinner but smiling and patient as ever.

"Well, well, Terry," the old man said, holding out his thin hand in welcome. "I knew you'd come back and stand up for your rights. When you're a good boy you shouldn't run away."

"I know, Andy. I was just frightened, that's all."

"Well, you ain't got no cause to be now. Mr. Ellsworth's had all them scout boys searching for you since Sat'dy afternoon. He found out the truth about that young scamp, Rollie, but he ain't going to tell on him because he wants to give him a chance. They got all the money back again."

"Man, I'm glad. And you, Andy—you'll be up again, huh?"

"My, oh me, yes. I'll be fine as a fiddle. Don't worry about me, Terry. The doc says

it's a lean horse for a long race and I guess that stands good for me too. Anyway, this business has taught me a lesson too, Terry. I ain't going to be a coward no longer."

Terry looked down at the thin, withered old face, pityingly. The word coward seemed absurd when associated with Andy. One thought, rather, of a gentle, meek old man whose cardinal sin had been a periodic laziness during the course of his life.

Terry shook his head and sat down on the old stool. "If you ain't a sketch, Andy," he said. "Honest, you're like a baby more than my uncle. You're so. . . ."

"Now, hold on, Terry," Andy protested, rising a little on his right elbow. "Don't say another word about how good I am till you hear how bad I've been. Terry—Terry, would you ever believed I was a kidnapper?"

Terry threw back his head and laughed, heartily. "Man, don't make me laugh!"

"Terry," said Andy, sternly, "I'm as serious as I'll be before God."

Terry's mirth left him. "Huh?"

"'T's true, Terry," Andy continued, seem-

ing to stare somewhere beyond the room. "I was a kidnapper and I kidnapped you."

Terry was too stunned to speak.

"It was the only time in my life that I was really mad, Terry, that's honest," he confessed, wearily. "I went back to beg for a job that I was fired off of through no fault of mine. Other times it was my fault but this time it wasn't. But no matter, I went back like I told you and I was refused. Old Man Terhune wouldn't even listen to me—we was in the summer house in the back of their place. . . ."

"Andy!"

"I know, Terry," he said, weakly. "Just let me tell you—I was so mad 'cause he wasn't just about me and I saw him stop after he walked away from me and look at the baby that the nurse was wheelin' in the carriage. He said to the nurse that you'd grow up to be a fine man some day—not a loafer. And I heard it, Terry. It went right through me 'cause old Jayson Terhune knowed I was a weak lunged one all my life."

"And don't I know it, Andy!" said Terry loyally.

"That's the son—but wait before you praise me! Old Jayson went on into the house and out in his car like as if I never existed and the gardener called out of the kitchen winder that the nurse was wanted in the house so she left the carriage standing right on the bank along by the walk that slopes down to the river."

"Just like Rollie told me, huh?"

Andy nodded and lay back on his pillow. "A big mastiff that they had came along and pushed it—I saw it with my own eyes and if I hadn't been there you would have been drowned—that's honest truth, Terry. You rolled down the bank and your feet was in the water when I run and got you. And then I was tempted to get even with Old Jayson—just then."

"Yeah," said Terry, anxiously, "and what about my mother——"

"Amanda? I met her just by luck five minutes later. She was coming down to keep house for me and of course she was right

frightened when I told her that she must make out as how the baby was hers."

"Man, and here I am, huh?"

"I was sore perplexed, Terry, and I meant to just give Old Jayson a good scare. I meant to put you back in time but as the weeks went by I got scared and I knew that they'd get me. The way things was they thought you was dead and I kept getting more fond of you every day and it got so I didn't have gumption to tell you when you were old enough."

"And my mother—man, Andy!" he said, accusingly.

"I know, Terry. Give it to me good. I did your mother more harm than I could Old Jayson. I realized it the other night when you told me that Rollie said she's never got over it. But I was so fond of you, it'd have killed me, anyhow, I guess. I'm just a simple old fool, Terry, and I ain't got respect for myself even. But one thing—don't think I ain't suffered for my sin—I ain't had a real contented day since I had you."

"And that no-account Rollie is my brother, huh!" Terry exclaimed, scornfully. "Man, I

ain't tickled to pieces over that, I can tell you. But Tuck says my mother is awful nice looking, is she?"

"She used to be, Terry, and I guess she is now. It's years since I . . ."

The doctor came quietly into the room and motioned to Terry that the patient needed to rest. Just as the boy was going to the door, Andy called him back. "I got to hear what you think of me so's I sleep easy, Terry," he said, weakly. "Either way I know I ain't did right—in fact, I've been a scoundrel, but I want to hear you say so."

Terry sat down on the edge of the bed and smiled. "Man, Andy what can I say, huh? Ain't you always been good to me—just like as if I was your son almost! And maybe if I'd have had to hang out with that Rollie I'd be as bad as he is now. I—I'm glad you kidnapped me—for a fact I am, 'cause then you wouldn't have had anybody would you, huh?"

Andy shook his head and smiled, and impulsively Terry did something he had not done for years. He kissed his uncle twice, on the lips that were now soft in sweet repose.

CHAPTER XXIV

TOO GOOD

Terry and Bumps had just finished a very sumptuous feast that had been provided by Mrs. Cornell and Mrs. Duff, when Mr. Ellsworth came into the kitchen and announced that Andy had left the world and its troubles.

Terry was stunned and gathered Bumps up into his arms and marched blindly out of the house. He did not know why or when his uncle's death occurred but it was a shock for him to know that within five short minutes that voice he loved had been stilled. Certainly it seemed no longer ago than that when he was denouncing himself emphatically.

No great wonder then that Terry did not stop until he came to the vast Terhune estate stretching majestically out over the hill that looks over Bridgeboro. And as he stood wait-

ing for Mrs. Terhune to come down into the hall, he bit his lip and trembled for now he was alone in the world.

Roland had been the cause of his misery and of Andy's death. Terry was sure of it and came to demand some retribution.

The grandeur of the place awed him and he turned around to contemplate his shabby, lonely little figure in the great mirror that lined the wall opposite the broad, shining stairway. He had never seen anything like it before in his life and he felt suddenly small and insignificant in the midst of it all.

"Anyhow, nobody knows who I am but that doctor that came in the room," he whispered into Bump's pulsating body. "And maybe he didn't hear everything—man, I'd have to start all over again, that's what. No, I don't want to be rich. I'll get a job and . . ."

A light tread on the stairway arrested his trend of thought and glancing into the mirror he saw a sweet-faced woman descending. He felt something surge over him again, that strange, lonely feeling. He watched her in the mirror, holding fast to the dog and waiting.

"I'm going to tell her what a no-good that Rollie is, that's what," he told himself as she stepped down into the hall.

She too looked into the mirror and smiled. Then her face drew up thoughtfully and she put her hand to her reddish gold hair and nodded. "I hear you're Terry Dunn and that you wanted to see me. Is that so?" she asked in a voice that sounded magically sweet to Terry's ears.

"Yes'm," answered Terry, all but speechless. One word, however, ran rampant through his mind. And when he stared back at her through the mirror he could only think of *mother*. His eyes became clouded again and he hated himself for it.

"My, but you're the picture of Roland," she went on, staring at Terry. "Only your eyes are bluer—as my son, Terrill's, would have been. Why, child—what's the matter?"

Terry gulped hard and tried to look himself again. "I—I guess I must have sort of felt bad. Andy—my uncle—just died."

"You poor child!"

Terry felt desperate. "I—I wanted to see Rollie about something, mm-mm——"

She smiled graciously. "Why, certainly, you may see him. But he's down at the Hurtleboro Aviation Field with his father and grandfather. They went down to see that plane off for Washington."

Terry rushed out of the house, leaving the lady quite astonished and perplexed. But he was determined. "I'm goin' to get a hitch down to that field or bust," he said to Bumps. "Honest, that Rollie ought to get it good for treating a lady—my mother—his mother, like that. He's a no-good, but I can't tell her, can I, Bumps?"

In the short space of sixty seconds, Terry procured a hitch on the back of an empty flour truck that was to go straight past Hurtleboro Field. Suddenly he realized that he had quite forgotten about the jewelry and his promise to speak for Tuck, and he told himself that he would ask Mr. Ellsworth to perform that task.

"It's no use," he said, despairingly. "She's my mother, all right, but she's too good for me. I looked like a hobo in that mirror along-

side of her, and believe me she noticed it too. Why, Bumps, she'd be ashamed of me—that's a fact. And I wouldn't blame her. After I've knocked around with Andy like I did. . . ."

He manfully put the thought aside. He decided that it wasn't scoutish to cry and vowed to bear up under his losses. Consequently, he was reinforced mentally, as it were, when the truck driver let him off at Hurtleboro Field.

He skinned under the fence and asked the proper direction to the outgoing Washington plane. A little crowd had gathered around it and the man who had answered his inquiries walked along with him to the farther end of the field.

"She's due to start any minute, kid," he said, "so you better snap into it if you want to see anybody."

Terry walked off mumbling that the only one he wanted to see was a no-account boy that was his brother. He hurried nevertheless and by the time he got within shouting distance of the plane the propellers were already roaring.

Roland saw Terry first and looked fearfully

from his father to his grandfather. He evidently thought that the boy he had so wronged had come back to tell his parent and grandparent, and his face became livid with fear.

Terry never knew exactly what prompted Roland to do what he did, but he always guessed afterward that his brother was so shocked at seeing him that he tried to do the first thing cowardice prompts anyone to do—escape.

At any rate, the plane was leaving the ground, sweeping the dust to one side like some great, graceful bird. A rope ladder which had been used the day before for some stunt flying was dangling from the side. People were shouting hoarse goodbyes to the famous aviator who was making the trip alone. And suddenly Roland's eyes gleamed—Terry saw it in a flash.

The ladder!

Roland dashed for it and grasped it. Terry put down the dog with one swoop and leaped forward impulsively, grasping the ladder with one hand and his brother's stout clothing with the other.

TERRY HOISTED HIMSELF A BIT UP THE SWAYING LADDER TO GIVE HIS BROTHER MORE ROOM.

People shouted—women screamed, but it was too late. The plane had already soared to a height that was dangerous for them to leap from. And so they clung perilously to each other, soaring higher and higher with every breath, it seemed.

"You fool!" Roland shouted, crying piteously.

"Shut up!" Terry cried, courageously. "You're the fool. Hold on to me—there!" He closed his eyes and hoisted himself a bit up the swaying ladder to give his brother more room.

Roland shouted, cried, then shouted some more.

It seemed like hours to Terry but in reality it was only a few seconds before another plane came whirring up in swift pursuit to warn their pilot of the human cargo that was clinging desperately to his ladder.

Terry shouted to Roland to have courage. "Hold on to my legs," he called. "I got this ladder good."

But Roland, instead of conserving his strength, was tiring himself out in bursts of

hysteria. He cried that he couldn't hold on—his hands were sore. Terry, perilously endangering himself, put out his foot for Roland to grasp.

Roland did not do it but released one hand to wipe the tears from his eyes. There was a scream—a pitiful scream, and Terry grew sick and faint as he felt the ladder sway lightly with his body.

Roland was gone.

It was only the whirr of the oncoming plane that jerked Terry's senses back to reality and gave him the superhuman strength to hold on to life. He kept his eyes closed and his fingers firm and kept a strangle hold on the swaying ladder until he felt the welcome sensation of swooping earthward.

People cheered and as he felt the earth beneath his feet he tried to smile. But Roland was gone. Terry fainted and came to with Bumps' aid—a joyous yelping and prolonged demonstration of his undying canine affection.

The boy had stood much and was borne home in Jayson Terhune's splendid car. He could

not make out who was beside him for at intervals the faintness came back and blotted out his vision entirely.

When he awoke later that afternoon, he found himself confronted by that beautiful lady with the red gold hair—his mother. Her face showed traces of tears but her eyes were smiling as she looked down upon the ragged little urchin who lay comfortably in the snowy linen.

"Terry—Terrill, my son," she said, sweetly.

Terry looked up and rubbed his eyes briskly. "Aw—huh?"

"Mr. Ellsworth told me, Terry," she said, sadly sweet. "And you weren't going to tell me, were you?"

"Well, now listen, lady," Terry protested, "I didn't mean nothing—say, where's my dog—Bumps? Huh?"

Mrs. Terhune laughed in spite of herself. "He's having the time of his mangy life out on the front lawn, Terry."

Terry smiled. "I bet he's a thoroughbred, anyway. Lots of mutts get the mange and you can cure 'em."

"Certainly you can," she said, obligingly. "And now as to Mr. Ellsworth—it's all been a terrible shock to me. I can't believe it yet!"

"Well, I'd just as leave you wouldn't, Mrs. —— I mean—aw, man," Terry said, rising a little. "It's hard on a rowdy fella like me. I can't get used to things. Anyway, you're too good for me. Andy and me were sort of like hoboes."

"It was queer that he should take you from me, causing me so much grief and yet was kind to you," she said, thoughtfully.

"You won't ever be crabby about Andy, will you?" he asked, anxiously.

"No, Terry," she answered. "I promise not to question or scold about anything so long as I have you."

"Well, I knew right away you were a good scou——man, I forgot! I always called Andy a good scout and I forgot!"

Mrs. Terhune shook her lovely head. "I can see you'll need a lot of training, Terry. But on the other hand I don't want to try and change you too much. It would spoil everything."

"Yeah, Andy always said I needed better training, but don't get me so Pip and Dink won't recognize me, will you?"

"Again I promise," she said, smiling.

"That Dinky and Pip can still be friends with me and be in my gang?"

Jayson Terhune, Junior, and Jayson Terhune, Senior, both smiled their consent as they came in through the doorway. Terry was utterly bewildered. He chilled at the thought of the discipline that awaited him, and lay back on his pillow hopelessly.

He was suddenly inspired and put out what he considered a feeler. "Can Bumps come in this house sometimes, huh?" he asked. And to himself he said: "Now I'll see if they're a lot of crabs or not."

Father and grandfather came over to his bedside and shook his hands heartily. "You can have a dozen Bumps around if you want," his father said, kindly.

"I've sent for a veterinary to come and cure Bumps of the mange," his grandfather added. "Now is there anything else, Terry?"

Terry wrinkled his brow, thoughtfully. "Say, do you mean that I can have anything?" he queried, incredulously.

The elder Terhune pursed his lips, thoughtfully, then smiled. "Of course there are a few things excepted," he answered, whimsically. "But I guess what you have in mind will be within our range, eh, Jay!" he said turning to Terry's father.

The younger Jayson smiled. "What is it you want, son?" he asked, tenderly.

Terry's heart warmed, and as he looked from one to the other of their smiling faces, the strange, lonely feeling seemed to slip away. He decided that it was something to be rich—to have *anything* one wanted. Immediately, he visualized the watchman at the Terhune Coal Yards and felt content with everything.

He smiled up at his mother, father and grandfather. "Well, if you'll let me have anything—it's a go, 'cause what I want is two nice big, juicy custard pies. One of 'em I want to eat."

CHAPTER XXV

HENRY STREET AGAIN

A month later found Terry stronger in every possible way. He had spent the four weeks following Andy's death with his new parents in Atlantic City and came back feeling that he had new worlds to conquer.

Time had softened his grief for the old man he loved so much and absence had made Pip and Dinky that much dearer to him. He broached the subject to his sweet, patient mother before he had been home five minutes.

"What is it you want to do for those good friends of yours, son?" she asked, always secretly amused at the expectation of what this newfound son of hers was likely to next bring about.

"Well, I got too many clothes for one thing," said Terry," and another thing Pip and Dinky

ain't got much now that I come to think of. I mean since I had so much I realize."

"What do you want to do—clothe them?" she asked, with a faint smile.

"Well, we got enough money, ain't we, Mom?"

"*Ain't* is wrong, Terry. Any school boy ought to know that. And Mother sounds better than Mom," she said, turning her head away to keep from laughing.

"Well, maybe ain't is wrong, but I can't see what's the matter with Mom. Man, it sounds better than a sissified Mother, ain't that right?"

Mrs. Terhune shook her head. "There's no use, Terry darling. You'll simply have to outgrow your rough speech."

Terry smiled. "Anyhow, you're a good scou—I mean a good Mom. Can I go for a visit down to Henry Street, huh?"

Mrs. Terhune nodded, "Come back in a respectable condition and be home on time. Your grandfather is strict only in that sense, Terry, so you can afford to obey that one command."

And before he left for his reunion his mother convinced him that many people, no matter how

poor, resent offerings of clothes. Terry went away without them but his pockets—six all told —were filled to overflowing with various delicacies that he had commandeered from the kitchen pantries.

The meeting between the three boys was demonstrative and Bumps (always faithful) shared in it to his utter delight. He now looked the part of a respectable rich boy's dog, having been completely cured of the mange and wearing a shorter tail in place of the long, stringy one. Despite all these alterations he still looked what he was—a lovable mutt. But Terry was adamant in his belief that the dog was a thoroughbred; he even insisted upon it after the veterinary asserted that he found no signs of it.

"That shows how much he knows about dogs," Terry explained to his awed followers. "I'd be better at it than him, that's a fact."

And so they retired down to Hunter's place to talk things over. The old life started where it left off and if it was not quite the same as when Terry and Andy lived together there was much else to compensate for those happy days.

In deference to his loyal little followers, Terry

punched holes in a brand new felt hat just so's he wouldn't look so dressed up. And when he returned home, tired and dirty and happy, his adoring parents said something about its being a wholesale extravagance, but none the less necessary.

Terry had captured them completely.

CHAPTER XXVI

TERRY TRIUMPHANT

And so before we leave Terry to his own pursuits we must take a look into the Hall on the next Friday evening after his return home. It was his first attendance at a real scout meeting and he went in rather doubtfully, but came out confident.

He had insisted that it was just to be a visit, but was astonished to see Pip and Dinky sitting in the chairs up front. "What you doing here, huh?" he asked. "You ain't going to go back on what you promised, huh?"

Pip insisted that they had no such intention. And it wasn't until after the meeting was called to order that they learned what was in store for them.

Mr. Ellsworth got up and smilingly announced that he had some tenderfoot candidates

to introduce to the gathering. "There are four of them," he said, smilingly, "and another one is expected. However, we'll expect those that are in to get more in."

There were cheers a-plenty from the crowded hall.

"Now for their names," said Mr. Ellsworth, getting down to business. He took a piece of paper off his desk and read: "Hartley Povey, Terrill Terhune . . ."

"You ain't meaning me," shouted Terry, "but call me Terry."

Everyone laughed.

Mr. Ellsworth looked down at him, kindly. Terry was not able to resist that look. He would never forget the scoutmaster's kindness to Andy.

"Man, you can't blame me, when I'm lead . . ."

"Terry, just step up with the others, won't you?" asked Mr. Ellsworth. "Everything will be explained." Then: "Nathaniel Cornell and Lemuel Duff conclude the list of tenderfoot candidates for tonight."

Pip and Dinky marched obediently forward

alongside of their leader to the accompaniment of an improvised mouth organ that Roy Blakeley had only lately devised. Its mechanism was too intricate to explain, resembling a small horn with a lot of wires wound around it. At any rate, it emitted weird, groaning noises and always succeeded in creating a good deal of laughter.

It brought a smile to Terry's frowning face in spite of the fact that he thought he had been taken in, as it were, to something not to his liking. And after the shouts died down and the boys had qualified for the tenderfoot class, Mr. Ellsworth addressed them.

"You fellows are only going to be free lance scouts for a few months," he said, pleasantly. "There's another fellow quite a little bit older than you are but he's desirous of passing the tests and becoming a thorough scout like the rest of us. That happens to be Tucker Marshall. He couldn't come because he's working tonight."

Terry gasped. "Man! Tuck?"

Mr. Ellsworth nodded. "Yes, that's he. He's started working as an errand boy for Mr. Tem-

ple and he's going to night school so I expect great things of him. He asked of his own accord whether or not he'd look silly going through the classes at his age."

"What did you say to him?" shouted Pee-wee Harris from the back of the Hall.

"I told him I thought it would be an innovation. What do you think, boys?"

From the chorus of voices that rose in assent, one gathered that they thought it was quite a thing. "He'll make a good partner for Pee-wee," said Roy Blakeley.

"And a good one for Dink!" thundered Terry, competing with Pee-wee as to voice.

The thought of Tucker Marshall, almost six feet tall, hobnobbing with either Pee-wee or Dinky created a spirit of comraderie among them. They were all one in laughter.

"And last but not the least announcement, and I think also a fair decision, is to make Terry Du—I mean Terhune, leader of the new Chipmunk Patrol when it is organized this summer. He will take the place of his brother who would have been leader had he been here.

"The parents of these other boys are all

agreeable. Indeed, they were agreeable long ago, but it was up to the boys themselves. At any rate, we're glad that they're here and we hope to find happiness together after the death and tragedy that has visited some of us and been felt keenly by the rest of us."

Terry stood rooted to the spot but grinning delightedly. "Say," he asked, as soon as Mr. Ellsworth finished. "Does that mean I'll be a first class scout by summer, huh?"

"If you work hard, Terry," answered Mr. Ellsworth.

"Well, I'll work hard all right, but man, ain't that great!" He looked toward Hartley Povey and smiled.

Mr. Ellsworth smiled. "Well, I guess you're happy and the rest of the tenderfeet are happy, eh? Aren't you glad you didn't try to back out again?"

"Sure," Terry admitted. "But one thing—it turned out just like I said. I said I wouldn't join until I could be leader and I didn't!"

THE END

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